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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM

THE POETRY REVIEW

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VOLUME XXXI

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The Poetry Review

Vol. XXXI THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED) 1940

At the beginning of 1915 THE POETRY REVIEW, as a war-time measure, became a bi-monthly instead of a monthly publication but the size of each issue was increased. This was a providential arrangement. It assured the continuance of this periodical when many other publications had collapsed never to be revived. A fervent interest in poetry new and old developed and the circulation of THE POETRY REVIEW increased rapidly and far beyond its pre-war sales and the enlarged issues were maintained until continually increasing costs of production caused a reduction in the size and number of pages. Those charges, except for paper, have remained at a high level and only recently have we been able to consider reversion to the more convenient monthly issue, now rendered impracticable again. But we hope circumstances will allow THE POETRY REVIEW to be continued in the form known to the great majority of its present readers; although, like the Income Tax, we start with a much higher level of expenses. We believe that it has and will become more essential than ever before—that it is an indispensable publication, as well as being unique.

Its policy and purpose must be preserved and extended in these distressing and destructive days. The choice is not between guns and butter but between the material and the spiritual, between the mechanical and the individual, between the temporal and the eternal. We must preserve our integrity in the midst of war; we must prepare for an after life on this earth, a post war world. The choice is ineluctable. The newspapers give the impression that all life and all interests must be centred on the war. If this were so, this time of the breaking of nations would end in the breaking of the Spirit of Man. The late Poet Laureate saw this in the last war when he published an anthology with that apt title appropriately recently re-published in a new edition by Longmans. The fine fervour therein described and fervently supported by the public mind and the efflorescence of the poetic spirit among the fighting men when the professional poets were shocked into silence, is not now apparent. That Spirit has now descended into

silence, if not completely deadened. The fruit of it, poetry, is less than a byword. The national newspapers paid no attention to the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Robert Browning—an event that should have produced comment and re-valuation of the work of a great poet still surviving after his physical death and capable of fortifying the individual and national mind. The Sunday papers, supposed to have a literary tradition, and able to devote pages to a glorified publisher's circular of reviews of inconsequential books trickling down double columns of advertisements, ignored their opportunity—could not spare a paragraph to Browning. A reminder of the event failed to break the silence. And the B.B.C. could not interrupt their dissemination of raucous imbecilities for a reference to Browning—or to any poetry at all. These portents are alarmingly significant. The banalities of the B.B.C. programmes, the implication that they represent our mental and spiritual needs and that the cinema is the only suitable and necessary form of public entertainment, with other indications of apathy and decadence, suggest we are not prepared, not fit to win the tremendous war that is now being waged, that it is not realized that we are warring not only against principalities and powers. Will the Spirit of Man revive and survive? Can we still say with Wordsworth that

> In our halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible knights of old.

Wordsworth and Watson, Browning and Milton may still clarify our muddled minds and rescue our virtue :

> Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
> And kings a dubious legend of their reign :
> The swords of Caesars, they are less than rust,
> The poet doth remain.

* * * * *

Three letters written by Percy Bysshe Shelley to his friend Thomas Medwin have been given to the Friends of the National Libraries by Lieutenant-Colonel C. F. Call. In the letters, written at Pisa in 1820 and 1821, Shelley speaks of Byron as a " much better and more successful poet than I am," and as one who knows " better the road to success than one who has sought and missed it."

Mr. Alfred Noyes will give a public reading on behalf of The Poetry Society early in the New Year.

WAR

THIS too will pass, this too will fade,
Into the shadow of a shade,
To be no more remembered then
Among the living thoughts of men
But as a dream of long ago
Of human folly, human woe.

This too will fade, this too will pass ;
Once more the green, the living grass,
Will cover up the scars of death ;
Once more the Eternal Spirit's breath
Will animate the dying soul
And make our wounded spirits whole.

All is not lost, though death may bring
Destruction on its poisoned wing.
Truth will prevail, though men deface
Its image to their own disgrace,
And freedom's flag shall be unfurled
Above the ruins of the world.

W. R. LATHAM.

INTERLUDE

OH glad bright day in a world of darkness !
Now I have put you by;—
Tenderly hidden from the night's duress
A clear swift stream, a sky
That autumn winds have patterned ; and no less
Gently, shelved, where pleasure cannot tire,—
Rustle of children's feet
Through the first fallen leaves ; a bridge ; a spire
Beyond the village street ;
The scent and drift of an October fire ;
The glossy chestnuts under their gold trees ;
A sunlit evening
Slow westering beyond the reach of peace;
A thrush who dared to sing.
Oh forthright day between uncertainties,
How worth remembering !

CARLA LANYON LANYON.

MYSTERIES

NOT to the wayward heart,
Striving for liberty,
Will joy of freedom come;
Whoever faithfully
Shall serve for no reward
Is truly free.

If any seek for power,
Content is his no more;
He, who in mercy gives,
Needs not the wealth of ore;
He has of heavenly gold
Untarnished store.

Peace is not for the mind
Intent on vanities;
That light of morning falls
On dim and weary eyes,
And o'er the broken heart
Those stars arise.

PAULINE HUTHWAITE.

NIGHT AND DAY

NIGHT knoweth answer, as I kneel in prayer:
Night knoweth answer, as I pray for care
Of soul, Beloved—soul beloved on earth.
Night knoweth answer, as I breathe her air:
Night knoweth answer, softeneth despair,
O soul, beloved;—soul beloved at birth.

Day knoweth answer, lendeth her impress,—
Day knoweth answer,—sun and wind's caress:
O soul, beloved; soulbeloved of mine.
Day knoweth answer, sun and rain to bless—,
Day knoweth answer, lighteneth distress
Of soul, Beloved—soulbeloved, Divine.

So Night and Day are gentle, fair and kind
When Love be dead, and Hope be hard to find.

C. R. B. SUMNER.

WINGED

WE have no assurances
That the bloom on cherry bough,
That the book beside the fire,
The nerve-soothing cigarette
Will be with us there as now.

There—constricting fold of Space
Binds the thought as strands of Time.
There shall be an otherness.
Nothing mortal is aware
Of Eternity's sublime.

Life's succession of good-byes
Steeps us age to age in tears.
So the child with shattered toys,
Flaming rapture of lad's-love
Done to death by chilling years.

Only Beauty does not pass
In the heart that lifts and sings,
Buoyant o'er the storms of time,
Anchored not to changing form,
Winged for other fashionings.

DULCIE EDEN GREVILLE.

HEAT

SILENCE possesses the river,
But innumerable sounds
Compose this stillness : quiver
Of wings as the plover grounds
Where sapless grasses shiver ;
Insects' drone on the coppered air,
And the suck of the river
Ebbing from mud-flats, bare
In the shadowless burning of the sun :
Silence possesses the river,
Watchman Time has ceased his rounds,
Earth and sky are one. E. CURT PETERS.

WAS EVER BLISS

WAS ever bliss like Mary's,
Where long ago she sat,
Where time or thought ne'er wearies,
Down at his dear feet?

The sun broke o'er her sitting;
All silently it came
To listen to him speaking,
And dream what she did dream.

The air stole round her softly,
The silent summer calm,
To breathe his breath most holy,
And catch his spirit warm.

The twilight found her kneeling;
Its shadows long and even
Were bowed with her in sharing
The blessèd sweets of heaven.

And was she lonely after
When he away was gone?
O ask the sun and twilight,
And summer's silent calm.

DUDLEY H. ANDERSON.

Victoria, B.C.

PRELUDE TO A HEADLINE

MORNING is mad. It shakes the sullen sky
And wakes the sleeping hills with sudden
Mirth. The hedges dripping night dry
In the vacant laugh. On the sodden
Folds of trees, the white air carves
Grotesque designs of cloud; curves,
In wild outlines to the frozen clutch
Of fields; and twists a living breath
Of light round a still thing in a ditch
To form a crazed caricature of death.

CON HARVEY.

POETRY, MECHANISM & YOUTH

The pessimists have laid their laurel wreaths; have sung their last praises and have gone away, gloated and indulged, by their sad emotions! In this world of machinery, has poetry not failed? And has it not also failed to grip the logical mind of youth? What tragedy there is in life, if we only desire to find it; if we only take the first most obvious interpretation that comes to mind and are content with its littleness; instead of probing the archives, which, like milestones, measure the long road of cause and effect.

Paradoxically, fairy tales live by their truth, and once more it is the story of the Sleeping Beauty. Poetry was pricked by the spindle of sentimentality (turned out as something the public would buy), then the antidote was a very strong injection of entirely unsentimental ideas, which had to be extreme, because the patient was dangerously ill. Then she slept it off in a thoroughly normal, healthy way and is waking to-day in the full tide of refreshed youth and beauty.

Poetry does not want to discard either the old or the new, she only wants to sleep off the poisoned scum that always obligingly comes to the surface! Those are the people who write for gain or copy a style which they have been unable to absorb and make their own. Either course cannot live; but those new writers who survive the test of time, whether we approve or not, have contributed to the life-blood of poetry. Since it is natural for the human animal to proceed with caution and suspicion, real understanding is often delayed, while ignorance is prolonged. Have we not a classical example in the wrong use to which machinery is put to-day? Machinery which, with its rhythm, accurate timing and extension of our weak and limited powers, could do so much for us, is, through ignorant standards, used for our own destruction! Yet there will come a generation far ahead that will be stupefied by our lack of universal thinking.

The machinery of God's creation can only succeed if it "works together for good" and the machinery of mankind likewise. The work of man's mind, soul and body, must be

used for the mind, soul and body of every other human being throughout the world. We must be proud that our creator has estimated our powers for so magnificent an attainment. The expression of man's mind, soul, or whatever you like to call his higher directive force, reveals itself through many channels. He is perpetually concerned with the way God creates and what he himself wants to create in emulation of this. Directly the guns cease fire, he gathers to sing sea chanties, or dance, laugh and write about what he feels. He uses the songs, the music, the words that other men of other races and countries have created. They have all followed this impulse, because they live in a world where creation is the governing law. Thus it shows that man understands creative art as apart from a specific race. In other words all that really matters in life, is *already used INTERNATIONALLY*. This is why it is utterly impossible for poetry to die, since it is the life-ballad of all that man has achieved in the past and all his song of striving for the future. Through this great medium, the poet of one race brings comfort and courage to another race, which perhaps his own people are afflicting sorely.

Again through this medium of poetry, " Youth " seeks understanding and alleviation from all that seems to rise up to crush him as he stands young and supple at the threshold of life. And the old find in it the steady courage that bids them " fight on " and blends that sunset-beauty, which no longer seeks for self. Last of all—hand in hand, the young and the old use it, to sing the glory of the awakening of created things.

THE DESPOT

HE who inclines to lovely things
Makes many triumphs of his own,
Where freedom spreads her ample wings,
And beauty lingers near the throne.
But he who takes a tyrant's place
And, traitor, acts a monster's part,
Proclaims his guilt to every race—
Outcast of nature and of art. W. MARSHALL.

THE POETRY OF ANDREW YOUNG

LOVE, Honour, Glory, Freedom, Sex—how much too easily we use capital letters! The words have been so mouthed by politicians and minor poets that they have become like Early Victorian pennies, on which only the dimmest outline of the original design can be discovered. It is high time we transferred our emotions to the lower case, for poetry also has joined the capital letters, and one reads with vague discomfort more and more articles in which it has become a kind of divine Abstract, with a tail no more to be salted than the tails of all those other divine Abstracts, which the pedagogues so diligently pursue.

Now any lover of poetry knows perfectly well that what he loves is not a divine Abstract, but a handful of particular poets and particular poems, and is justly irritated when he finds Collins and Coleridge and Henry King veiled under a large, pretentious, indefinable word—and then mysteriously written about in intellectual weeklies under some such title as *What Poetry Means*. It is not what Poetry means that matters, but what Collins or Coleridge or Henry King mean; just as it is not Love that matters to the lover, but a unique and individual Cynthia, Damaris or Chloe. I find myself therefore less and less interested in speculations about Poetry, and more and more devoted to the study of a handful of individual poets. Now that the world has, in a few brief months, so changed its values that almost all men have found the loyalties of the old life treacheries in the new, it is more than ever important that they should determine what things remain true and permanent for themselves. In the mazes of the darkest nightmare it is reassuring to find even a few lanterns still burning with a steady flame. Such a reassurance I have myself found recently in the *Collected Poems* of Andrew Young (*Cape*, 1936) and in his latest volume, *Speak to the Earth*, which appeared in the middle of December 1939.

The range of the vision that crystallizes in the poetry of these two volumes is a very narrow one, but it is the vision of no common mind. For nearly all these poems were born

in moments of intense awareness, in that swift irradiation of the spirit which comes only from prolonged and loving concentration on symbols of a profounder reality. There is little here to remind one of the familiar surface world of action. To Andrew Young, as to the Chinese landscape painters, humanity is an integral part of the hills and streams among which he has his being. Indeed, the feeling of unity, the roots of the earth and the talk of stones, is the dominant note in these poems. Birds and flowers are not merely decorations or delights to serve man's pleasure: they are, as is he, patterns in the rhythm of all universes.

> " And with wren, finch and tit
> And all the silent birds that sit
> In this snow-travelled wood
> I warm myself at my own blood."

That, in its quiet restraint and in its recognition of the kinship between the birds and the rooted trees and uprooted man, is among the most characteristic of his verses.

The subjects of Andrew Young's meditations are on the one hand things as impassive and tremendous as cliffs, trees, sunlight, rain and roads: and, on the other, those little miracles which, in the very perfection of their littleness, are also as astounding as eternity. There are many more poems on birds, tender, jesting, colloquial—as though here was a shared secret, hidden from blinder wayfarers. There are poems about all little things, about crabs, snails, spiders, glow-worms, hares, moles, rats—a world wide as the sky, crowded with tiny mysteries. The lover of trees and solitude and moving waters is no less ardent a lover of the minute, unnoticed creatures that inhabit them.

The most immediately noticeable quality in this poetry is its colloquial ease. It is a poetry of inspired talk: it crystallizes the casual meditations of a country ramble. Thoughts seem to rise effortlessly in his mind, shaping themselves to an image, an arresting metaphor, bubbling up from queer corners, one idea setting light to half a dozen others.

> Far too intent on a blackcap
> Perched like a miser on the yellow furze
> High over Birling Gap,
> That sang " Gold is a blessing not a curse."

It is as though the sight of the singing bird called up the image of the miser in his black skull-cap, peering at a hoard of yellow guineas ; and the picture of the miser's gold had stirred the thought of sunlight, the gold that is no curse. Such meditation appears as artless, and is in fact as fresh and as rigidly controlled as the narratives of Robert Frost or the lyrics of Edward Thomas. In technique Andrew Young has a close affinity with both these poets : in spirit he is more in touch with the mystical innocence of the Seventeenth Century.

> If it should come to this,
> You cannot wake me with a kiss,
> Think I but sleep too late
> Or once again keep a cold angry state.

In this lovely poem, *A Prospect of Death*, there is something of the tenderness and simplicity of Henry Vaughan : something of it too in *Idleness* :

> God, you've so much to do,
> To think of, watch and listen to,
> That I will let all else go by
> And lending ear and eye
> Help you to watch how in the combe
> Winds sweep dead leaves without a broom ;
> And rooks in the spring-reddened trees
> Restore their villages,
> Nest by dark nest
> Swaying at rest on the trees' frail unrest ;
> Or on this limestone wall,
> Leaning at ease, with you recall
> How once these heavy stones
> Swam in the sea as shells and bones ;
> And hear that owl snore in a tree
> Till it grows dark enough for him to see ;
> In fact, will learn to shirk
> No idleness that I may share your work.

It is only the man aware of possessing a personality who can begin to long for his release : it is only those capable of being idle who can begin to realize that we are most alive when we are least busy. The Puritan idea that Satan findeth mischief for idle hands to do, ignores the fact that God only visits those who can bear not to be busy. And they are very

few. It was not for nothing that mediaeval theologians numbered *Accidia* among the deadliest of the sins.

It is difficult to imagine a writer less able to be bored, less willing to fritter away idleness by being Busy, than Andrew Young. He is so continually aware of the way in which men who are not made slaves by circumstance will deliberately, even joyfully, handcuff themselves to the trivial—

> I wondered at the mighty horse
> So meekly since the day began,
> Toiling to make himself a corse,
> And then I wondered at the man.

It is a very mildly ironic wonder, for he has none of Shelley's proccupation with a humanity which is so loath to sacrifice its suffering. He sets on one side all the huge impotent Business of being, rather like the child in Hans Andersen, who looked with such innocent impudence at the King; but he sets it aside with a gesture of amazed pity rather than of condemnation, for, like every poet, though he can stand outside the wheel, he knows that he himself is bound to it.

But it is this unfailing ability to remove himself, to dwell in the Secret Stairway, "watching with mind as quiet as moss", that gives Andrew Young his peculiar power. Detachment, sympathy, awareness—the synthesis of these apparent contradictions is the core of his finest verse. Awareness, above all. It is only our lack of awareness that has led us to commit the crimes of civilization. Our sole excuse is our blindness: our only plea that we know not what we do. It is, in fact, only our blindness that prevents our being poets. Andrew Young possesses the attentive concentration of spirit which Keats and Shakespeare possessed, without which poetry, however exquisitely wrought, remains unlit, the quality which is the secret of all magic. He can observe with such eager delight and love, that he himself becomes what he sees—as Keats for an instant actually *was* the sparrow he watched pecking in the gravel outside his window.

> I made myself as a tree,
> No withered leaf twirling on me;
> No, not a bird that stirred my boughs,

> As looking out from wizard brows
> I watched those lithe and lovely forms
> That raised the leaves in storms.

He broods so quiet and concentrated among the trees that he is caught up in their secret pulse, seeing, listening, *being*: till he is a part of every tiny stir of life about him,

> Each sound
> Of leaf on twig or ground
> And finch that cracked a seed
> Torn from a limp and tarnished weed
> And rapid flirt of wings.

The yelp of a hunting dog can poison with fear's infection a whole wood; the sight of a dead rat throw a cold shadow across a hillside. "The chameleon poet," said Keats, "has no character. . . . He is continually in for and filling some other body." The poet's personality is fluid, like the actor's. He is at his best as a poet when he is least a man, when he is temporarily a tree, the sound of the wind, music, a voice in air. He acts an endless game of make-believe, playing at death in a high wood or floating across the sunlit cliff with the "sleepy gull that yawned And spread its wings and dropping disappeared."

The power of identification, of complete absorption with scene and mood gives to all Andrew Young's poems the imaginative intensity of high authentic poetry. The packed simplicity of such things as *In December* or *White Harvest* is found again and again in single-lines—"years and years and man's thoughtful foot," where the magic dwells in one word; or

> "That spider would not stir,
> Villain of her Greek Theatre",

where in a magnificent metaphor the grey stepped circle of the web is one with its tragic significance; or, in the same poem,

> "Now she weaves in the dark
> With no light lent by a star's spark"

(and how dark this is!)—or, over and again, in every poem, such lines as

" Songs brief as Chinese poems the birds sung."

" Beneath a small white cloud that soon
Will pluck light from the dark and be the moon."

" The stars caught in the trees' dark stratagem."

It is a vision intensely vivid and alive, but it is a queer vision. Because he sees things as they are, he does not see them as other men. It is as though he were looking at the world through the wrong end of a telescope, observing an image rimmed very bright and clear in a tiny circle of light : and yet, even in so minute a picture, there is implicit a *whole*.

Ah, that was but the wind
Your soft down stirred,
O bird, lying with sidelong head ;
These open eyes are blind,
I cannot frighten you away ;
You are so very dead
I almost say
" You are not a dead *bird*."

These lines isolate the little ball of draggled feathers (such infinite leagues from the thing of light and air and song), and yet in some mysterious way there is implicit in the poem as wide a landscape as that in the *Walrus and the Carpenter*. The same strange power of painting a whole enchanted landscape in a handful of reeds, a blown leaf, a dead crab, dwells everywhere in these minute and loving descriptions. It is a power which the old Chinese painters also possessed, and not often to be found elsewhere. Other nature poets paint their scenes on broad canvases, the Salvator Rosa magnificence of Thomson, the warm wide light of Clare; but Andrew Young says more than they do by saying less. It is the same paradox whereby the mere weathercock in the moonlight of the *Ancient Mariner* is more tremendous than all the elaborate detail of *Enoch Arden*. Young's caterpillars arching green backs on a coat-sleeve, his sunbeams,

Gold mouths that drew apart and singled
And ran again and met and mingled,

his snails in their flat tree of ivy (" each china throat sealed up with glair ")—in all of them there is something far bigger than the detail so exquisitely observed. He can embody the immortal spirit of a wood in a wisp of corn, and epitomize all Autumn in the small " open sarcophagi " of hazel-nuts. He is fascinated by the upside-down world of water, Beaulieu River in its " blue sky-borrowed coat," the missel-thrush peering down through its high branches seeing the traveller " crawl at the bottom of the air ", the silver reflections of the hills which, rowing across Loch Luichart, he seems to climb. And how vividly, with this inverted vision, he paints the mole building his cavern in air !

> For you to make a mound
> Was as for us to make a hole ;
> What wonder now that being dead
> Your body lies here stout and square
> Buried within the blue vault of the air.

Moles, crabs, butterflies. . . . Trivial, you may retort ; mere escapism ! As though the world were not as magically interpreted by the butterfly as Behemoth ! Of course poetry is an escape—so is music, so is God, so is all real thought and feeling. But it is not a Bank Holiday from a reality too boring or too horrible to be endured into a coloured dream-land neither here nor there. It is rather an escape from the chaos of phenomena to the cosmos of Reality. Men will argue till the last Trump about the True and the Real ; but on the human level there is no Truth and no Reality—there are only truths, there are only realities. Poetry is an escape from the caged human level, " limbs, spongy brain and slogging heart ", to that world of which only through the visions of the poets or our own stray seconds of awareness can we catch our broken gleams.

The means whereby Andrew Young conveys his vision are only apparently casual. The High Utterance, the carefully-wrought magnificence of phrase, has become suspect in an age so debauched with capital letters. Instead of Youth at the helm and Pleasure at the prow, we prefer to speak of Nell and Harry at the Cinema. It is partly the fault of the Georgians, who spelt Beauty with such a very

large B. Amid a surfeit of superlatives, we turn more and more to the passionate understatement of Housman, the charged colloquialism of Robert Frost and Edward Thomas. But Frost and Thomas, though their range is wider, tend at times to slacken tension too far, till they become garrulous or dull. Andrew Young has so relentless a conscience and so complete a mastery of his instrument that even his lightest poems are never trivial nor his longest diffuse. His words are never merely stopping a gap. It would be a lesson in the infinite labour of poetry-writing to watch the gradual transformation of his work, for it is clear that these lyrics in the *Collected Poems* have only very slowly and through many years struggled to perfection. His ease masks an astonishing delicacy of ear. The delightful finished frailty of his poems is due, in part, to his adroit use of rhyme. He will employ rhymes like *beard-heard*, *wood-touchwood*, assonances, dissonances, eye-rhymes, rhymes on unaccented syllables—

> Or see how in the copse
> The last snow was the first snowdrops.

> The shade once swept about your boughs
> Quietly obsequious.

> How often from the shade of trees
> I thought of that rich man, Dives,

and achieves more than once such a marvel of fragile music as

> So I adored to-day
> No, not his ghost
> But the saints in Westwell window,
> And her the most
> Who knelt there with no head
> But was so very
> Adorable a saint
> In dress of crushed strawberry.

Such charged simplicity is only won by concentrated brooding on an idea, till every word is brimmed with meaning.

> Bracken lifts up slender arms and wrists
> And stretches them, unfolding sleepy fists.

If there isn't a God Almighty, how can a handful of worn words we pass to and fro in daily casual talk create so unforgettable a vision? It is in his metaphors and adjectives that a poet most vividly reveals his power. All Andrew Young's words are the result of the long searching of imagination; and when they are found they appear as inevitable and unforced as "mahogany chestnuts", the "reptilian heads" of asparagus, the "blue untidy faces" of violets, the "puffed sleep" of a bird in the snow, "ivy with the sunlight wet". Sometimes they contain the essence of an entire poem—"Roller-striped fields, and smooth cow-shadowed pond"; and sometimes they are miracles begotten upon impossibility—

> I watched them leap and run,
> Their bodies hollowed in the sun
> To thin transparency,
> That I could clearly see
> The shallow colour of their blood
> Joyous in love's full flood.

This is true of most of his descriptive poetry: it means far more than it appears to say. A rapid careless reader might dismiss these poems as pretty trifles, but to read them as they should be read is to devote to them something of the quiet and patient searching that went to their creation. Could any words more vividly describe than these at once the permanence, the muscular solidity, and the delicacy of a beech-tree—

> Strength leaves the hand I lay on this beech-bole
> So great-girthed, old and high;
> Its sprawling arms like iron serpents roll
> Between me and the sky.
>
> One elbow on the sloping earth it leans,
> That steeply falls beneath,
> As though resting a century it means
> To take a moment's breath.

Could any scene be more brilliantly or economically conveyed than in these two windy golden lines:

> Bright as a bird the small sun flits
> Through shaking leaves that tear the sky in bits,

or one simile so hold the heart of a poem as this—

A lark as small as a flint arrow
Rises and falls over this ancient barrow?

This is something more than a clever comparison, for the lark is not only a song but a symbol, just as the long lean thistles,

Beggars ragged and blind
Half their white silken locks
Blown away on the wind

are all the wildness and decay and the burning rags of Autumn. So to me there is a whole world in these few stamping lines:—

The stable-boys thud by
Their horses slinging divots at the sky
And with bright hooves
Printing the sodden turf with lucky grooves.

As still as a wind-hover
A shepherd in his flapping coat leans over
His tall sheep-crook. . . .

All the bright blown day is in that word "wind-hover"! He has the poet's gift of linking diverse ideas, that freshness of sight which makes the familiar suddenly exciting and strange, from the glimpse of a flock of pigeons wheeling over the downs "with noise of sudden rain", to the "blunt webbed fingers" of ivy or

The whitened worms that lay
Like stalks of hyacinths,
The last end of a children's holiday.

There are certain stray verses and couplets that "carry their own day" and are as complete in themselves as Chinese poems.

The pollards hold up in the gloom
Knobbed heads with long stiff hair
That the wind tries to make a broom
To sweep the moon's faint feather from the air.

This cobbled beck that through the night
Breaking on stones, makes its own light,

In all English literature I do not recall a softer snowier line than " Plump snow tumbled on snow softly with sudden dumps." It echoes the bright creak and smother, the quiet dizzy labouring of falling flakes exactly as music. This power of creating a vision in the mind by sudden flashes of metaphor is superbly shown in the *Chalk Cliff*—

> Save for frail shade of jackdaw's flight
> No night was there,
> But blue-skyed summer and a cliff so white
> It stood like frozen air ;
> Foot slipped on damp
> Chalk where the limpets camp.

It is interesting to contrast with this Edward Thomas' treatment of the same scene in his *Chalk-Pit*, which is the vague, half-realized background to human tragedy. In Andrew Young's poetry human beings scarcely appear at all, unless they are firing guns in a wood or riding wild animals to death. Nature is more vividly and urgently alive than man, something at once familiar and aloof, something so intense that more than once he can only express its life in terms of music, so that the moon sounds as loud as a silver bell, and the leaf on the stripped tree whirls in the air, " bursting into song." He has so profound a feeling for the things of earth and air, that his poems seem built of the same material as their subjects, they are delicate as a blown wisp of fog ; they are wet and glittering like a pool ; they are hewn massively out of living rock.

> The ghostly boulders come and go
> And two hoarse ravens croak
> That hopped with flapping wings by a dead sheep.

There is the terror of mist and high empty places in those lines : they are a thousand feet above the warm world of men. How lumpy and solid and tumbled are the verses on Long Meg and her sister boulders : and how gaunt and desolate those two " lean-headed eagles " that perched beside the sunset road

> Rain-pitted to the bone
> And the last dregs of daylight searched
> With their blind eyes of stone,

He is the quietest, least obvious of poets. To read him is to travel into solitary places, to find worn things suddenly shining in the light of an unfamiliar dawn. His humour, his irony, his tenderness are subtle and remote : for to enter his world is to walk out of the busyness of things to the still centre of a wood, or to sit, divinely idle, on the bank of a stream that flows from nowhere in particular to nowhere in particular. Because he is a true nature-lover and no sentimentalist, he does not take it lightly. He is not only in the fields but of them : and nowhere but in the solitude of meditation, lonely, in the dark, with himself for companion, is he at one with himself.

Most of the rest of us are like the beggar in *Nicodemus* ; cured of our blindness, we long to be blind once more. Awareness has its agonies. To see the world as it is is to see beyond the world

> That most bitter abrupt brink
> Where the low-shouldered coffins sink :

to see in the dark unfathomable backward Time dropping like a leaf and the Roman sentry pacing by Crag Lough : to find oneself in a world so unbearably lovely that one watches and listens like an animal, knowing one trespasses. It is, I think, this extraordinary sensitiveness which gives Andrew Young his assured and permanent place in twentieth century literature. We are suffering very grimly now for having denied the values he re-affirms. He is not a prophet of the marvellous, he is a traveller who has gone about a strange world with open eyes.

> Here I loiter a lost hour,
> Listen to bird, look on a flower.
> What will be left when I am gone ?
> A trodden root, a loosened stone
> And by the blackthorn caught
> Some gossamery thought
> Of thankfulness to those dead bones
> That knit hills closer than loose stones.

It will be something if, not too late, a few of those who walk after him down the same quiet paths find his footprints in the grass.

RONALD FULLER.

FRANCIS JAMMES
"THE SWAN OF ORTHEZ"

"I HAD been coming to you for a long time, Jammes," wrote Charles Guérin.

To have idealised a poet and even chosen him as a master before life had ever afforded an opportunity for a meeting, and, when that opportunity offered, to have found the reality in no wise inferior to the ideal, but rather its fulfilment, the master, in life, the fullest realization of the dream, is a rare experience. And that rare experience fell to Charles Guérin, whose two famous poems, *To Francis Jammes*, more than a fine tribute of friendship and an expression of kinship of soul, are also a monument for ever to the "Oak of Hasparren," the "Swan of Orthez," the while they raise Guérin himself to the height of his subject.

His admiration for Francis Jammes was no new thing; for long years he had known and loved his work and for long years he had meant to effect a meeting; when the moment came, it brought no deception with it: "I found you as I had dreamed of you."

And, in relating the visit, Guérin makes his friend live for us: the bearded face, the eyes frank and smiling, but behind them a touch of wistfulness and in their gaze the serious sorrowfulness of a heart consumed in passion, the desolation of a sense of loss.

November 1st last was the first anniversary of the passing from French letters of the patriarchal figure of Francis Jammes, the poet, who, more than any other had achieved no ordinary fame by the use of no extraordinary means, and and who had resolutely refused, from 1891, the date of the publication of his first slim book of poems, to succumb to the centralizing attraction of Paris, in defiance of all unwritten literary law and tradition, and in spite of many pressing invitations. He preferred instead to live and die near the Béarn with which he is unfailingly identified. Indeed the Basque province, to which he remains faithful through all his seventy years, is the only background for

this " son of Virgil " ; from it, as from a frame, the clear, quizzical eyes of Jammes have gazed on succeeding schools of poets, the while the beard grew white around his smile ; he himself, honoured by them all, identified himself with none, but insisted on maintaining his integral independence, convinced, no doubt, that adherence to a literary doctrine would impair his originality, make his work less virile, since none had the same source of inspiration as he, and none but he could become the voice of Béarn. In speaking of the life of the province, he spoke what he lived, of that which was the very fibre of his being.

Curiously enough, however, he was not of peasant stock. He was born at Tournay on the banks of the Bigorre, of a bourgeois family. His father, the son of a doctor, was a Registrar, who though born in Guadeloupe, had come to France for his education at the age of seven. The incident is not without significance. All his life long Francis Jammes will feel in his blood a mysterious call, the call of the West Indies, a special affinity with his forebears who had settled there. As a child, he was sent to the Lycée in Bordeaux. It cannot be said that his course of study there had a cramping effect ; it was simply indifferent to him in the main. As he did his humanities without much enthusiasm, literature alone of all subjects made any appeal to him ; his love of the Romantic poets was intense. There was something in them that found an answering note in his own heart. Failure in his Baccalauréat drove him back on a minor occupation and made him work for several years as a clerk in a lawyer's office.

" I am but a man and therein lies my greatness " : the words are eloquent both of his life and of his work. When he came to Orthez, the home of his people, where his father was laid to rest in 1888, and where his mother and sister settled, his constitution undermined and his whole future uncertain, it was the life of the place and its invading peace which saved him. Orthez, where he was to live for thirty-three years, is

" the kind of little town that is sure of its own quiet charm. From the height of its Moncade Tower, tall, slim vestige of the castle of Gaston

Phoebus, there tumble down, through the streets with their big paving stone, crowded houses with faded tiles, either side of the ' gave ' over which the old fortified hump-backed bridge arches like the handle of some strong wrought basket. In this town where the only policeman regulates the traffic in carpet-slippers, passions, sentimental, political and religious, are violent and held in."

Jammes' one desire, a wild, driving desire, was to live, and he had the perspicacity to see that his lack of balance could be restored, if anywhere on earth, in the spot that was home to his family, and by those who had known and cared for his father. And so, far from fleeing men, he sought their company, took pleasure in their society, shared their interests. There were men of all types, " so many men, and such different ones who have come to me far more than I to them," men who exercised their profession in the little back-water of Orthez, men who went out shooting, men who had travelled, others who had never moved away from the flocks and herds they tended or from the furrows they had ploughed.

A love of botany, born even in his Bordeaux days, charged with meaning the attraction of nature which drew him out of himself and, by reorientating his thoughts, restored to him peace of mind, which peace pervades a great deal of his poetical work.

He showed his first verses to Herbert Crackenthorpe, the son of Lord Montague, who happened to be staying in Orthez and with whom he had become friendly. He, in his turn, showed them to Stéphan Mallarmé. They came to the notice of Henri de Régnier and won from him warm praise in the pages of the *Mercure de France*; André Gide offered to finance the publication of the next volume, and Pierre Loti helped to convince Ollendorff of the desirability of publishing a collection of the poems of Jammes. The reception of the first modest book of poems, under the unpretentious title of *Vers*, by poets who had already achieved fame, was an enthusiastic tribute to the talent of Jammes, and eloquent of their own generosity. At the marriage of De Régnier and Hérédia's daughter, Marie, he met many of the leading Symbolists, Marcel Schwob

and Viélé-Griffin, among others, but he resolutely resisted any attempt to bring him within reach of the attraction of Paris. That he did so, and was yet recognized at his true value, is a case unique in its kind.

To shoot wild goose, to hunt the boar, to let the loveliness of the land sink into his soul, his preference went out to these things and with what result!

It was with *De l'Angélus de l'Aube à l'Angélus du Soir* that Jammes came to real fame. Here, as in all his bucolic poems, is a work of striking originality and of the utmost simplicity. Poets innumerable in the renaissance that regionalism and the work of the Félibres gave to France have succeeded in recreating the life of their village, their commune; none has achieved what Jammes has achieved; more than living its life, more than identifying himself with it, more than understanding it through and through, he has let the scenes he described speak with his voice; he has lent them the living reality of his own throbbing passion, has given them expression in words that are powerful to strike a vibrant note; he has communicated to them his own exquisite sense of the loveliness of words, his power to render sensation by colour effects, or by unusual combination of the two.

"My God, Thou didst call me from among men. Here am I. I suffer and I love. I have spoken with the voice that Thou didst give me. I have written with the words that Thou didst teach my father and my mother, and they have handed them on to me. I pass along the highway like a burdened donkey hanging its head; and the children laugh at it. I shall go whither Thou willest and when Thou wilt.

"The Angelus is ringing."

This Preface to *De l'Angélus de l'Aube à l'Angélus du Soir* gives the note of simplicity which is that of all his writing, a simplicity which is in itself a triumph of achievement; it comes from the twofold source of a mastery of words and the personal note lent by his constant use of the first person. Better than generalization, a concrete example may give some idea of his technique and procedure. Our thoughts travel back to the thirteen lines of *Avec ton parapluie bleu et tes brebis sales*—and notice in passing that the first line is the only way to identify his poems. In its

kind, the poem is a perfect little cameo : the passing of the peasant-woman and her sheep from the hillside to the fragrance of the mountain, the realism of the dirty sheep, the odour of cheese-making that clings about the woman's garments, the donkey laden with milk cans, the village forges gradually left behind and with them the hum of everyday life. Below the mists clinging round the mountain peaks, the sheep graze like white bushes and far below them again the red smoke curls up through the oncoming night. In the calm the peasant-woman gazes on the Spirit of God hovering over these great spaces.

The scene is, in itself, one that has, in its general lines, been described innumerable times before. Jammes himself has no illusions about this. In *La Poésie* (*Géorgiques Chrétiennes*), which is a kind of profession of his poetic faith, he admits that the beauty of the world is new to every man who loves it. The source from which Ovid and Virgil drew is the same for him :

"To the kid that is wearied it would seem that the wood brings forth each berry for the first time."

But though the elements are such as many have used, the handling of them is peculiar to Jammes. In the first place the note is entirely conversational ; a large part of his work is, indeed, pleasantly intimate, familiar chat with the reader. By some the constant use of the first person has been adduced, erroneously, as egotism. The homeliness of the effect is further achieved by the use of a capital letter only after a full stop ; the qualities of limpid prose are thus achieved, though in rhymed verse.

The scene is built up, not by long descriptions, but by successive touches that are more than mere enumerations. Here is no wide sweep of background and details picked out, but rather detail added to detail, little dabs that build up a composite picture, and the setting brushed in majestically at the end.

But what details ? A figure or two, with just the dominant note that will give the line and impression without over-insistence ; the blue umbrella of the woman, her holly-stick, the rough-haired dog, the sheep, first dirty, and then,

in changing light, like white bushes. The very use of the names of things is evocative, whole pictures in mere series of names, a certain insistence achieved by the use of the same preposition as an introduction :

> " With your blue umbrella . . .
> With your clothes. . . .
> With your dirty sheep. . . ."

Sensation comes from colour. Blue, especially, is the atmosphere-effect that Jammes uses to such an extent that it is almost the dominant characteristic of his poems, the one which indubitably makes for some of his finest lines. Every tone of blue, in every light, at every hour, it is all pervading.

" Yes, I do feel that I am like the mountains, and my sorrowfulness is the colour of the gentians that grow there."

" Silence. Then a swallow on a shutter makes a sound of azure in the cool, *bluing* air."

Very frequently whole scenes are constructed without, if the paradox may be pardoned, without being constructed. Three salient features are picked out and named ; one verb becomes in itself a vital contribution to the composition of the picture. Each part is a little picture in itself, and round it the imagination can play ; juxtaposed, the parts form a complete canvas :

> " A church. Singing. A cock."

Or again :

> " Hear the cock. Hear the bell. Hear the peacock.
> And yonder, yonder, hear the donkey.
> The black swallow sweeps about,
> And far away roll poplars ribbon-like."

The characteristic sounds of the country, the creaking of a cart, the clucking of hens, the lowing of cattle, the twittering of birds, there is nothing that might not be in any simple piece of prose ; lists, if you will, just as his constant repetitions are lists, but between them and any random list, all the difference of literature, because the things they enumerate go down to the very sources of life ; work on the land, cottage crafts, all the things men do for themselves, these are the things that have real values.

But his talent is not confined to water-colours in the out-of-doors (of which, perhaps, one of the most varied and complete is his *Calendrier Utile*, dedicated to Remy de Gourmont, a veritable countryman's diary—or part of *Le triomphe de la vie*) ; he can just as effectively handle oils in painting interiors with all the warmth of the rich, rather voluptuous colouring of Dutch interiors. One's thoughts fly to his own description of Flemish paintings :

" J'ai vu sur les murs de vieux salons des tableaux flamands . . ."

Conscious of the debt of the present to the past, sure of the richness that comes to men from their oneness with their ancestors, his work is enriched by the old-world atmosphere he can create, or rather, re-create. He has a predilection for old gardens, castles, houses, for settings haunted by the figures of the past, by maidens, even languishing of love. The charge of sentimentality might be brought ; it would be a false one. Even in the seemingly exaggerated story of *Clara d'Ellebuse* there is more than a modicum of foundation in fact. He recaptures the spirit of a garden because he lives the past of the garden and sees those who have walked beneath its trees, those who have joyed and suffered there. His elegiac poems have all the charm of novels not strictly modern ; the delicate beauty of old china. Who was it who said in answer to a guest's wonderment at the completeness of a tea-service of great age and in constant use : " My dear, these cups have been washed by gentlefolk for two hundred years." The words, quoted without means of verification, give some idea of the delicacy of touch which Jammes brings to the scenes. Particularly in *Le deuil des primevères*, this lavender-laden air is a recalling of the past in the garden of the present.

His own life, after the excesses of youth, had known sorrow and regret. Proud though he was,

" What again ! If they had the slightest talent. . . .
They do not understand me, any more than the Félibres understand me."

His sympathy went out to the suffering, and the immense pity of Lourdes was the chief impression of his first visit to the sanctuary in the Pyrenees.

By 1888 he had lost his faith, in the way that countless youths in Latin countries go through a crisis of doubt, but the memories of Benedictions, Vespers, processions, and the Christmas crib were still with him, so that even in 1888, he could write :

" It's all one to me, those who say that He exists, or that He doesn't, for the village church was grey and sweet."

There was a poetical tenderness in his soul for the things of that religion which had lost its grip, because he knew so little of it : " I thought that God was a white-haired old man, who always gave you what you asked of Him," but conviction came back to him in the summer of 1905, with much of the same intensity as it came to the poet he so much admired, Paul Claudel ; indeed, his conversion was in great measure due to Claudel's influence and it shot his work, as his life, through and through with all the iridescent loveliness of the grandness of the world informed by the presence of God. Not that his poetry ever reaches the heights of Claudel's work, which is in a class apart, profound and philosophically grand ; it has, rather, the joy and simplicity that we associate with St. Francis of Assisi.

Is the story his own—that of the young man who went to a hamlet church—a young man who had suffered much ? There he saw a maiden, a wealthy maiden. He came again and again, for he had fallen in love with her. He married her, and " the young man with the sorrowful heart was cured for ever and happy at last " (1897).

Not always is a man's estimate of himself the best criterion of his value. But in *La Poésie*, already mentioned, Jammes gives us, in a manner, an explanation of himself. He is conscious of a harmony of soul between himself and Virgil, mainly springing from the realization that their best work grew out of the land. Far from repudiating it, he even stresses the fact that his subjects lack originality, in the sense that they are the things of nature that, down the centuries, have fed the work of many poets. But his eyes come fresh to the contemplation of scenes as old as the world, nor is he deterred from singing them because he is not the first to sing their beauty, just as prayer is the first

poem, and that is said by all the earth. He maintains that his line is classical (twelve syllables), but freed from bonds by logical treatment. He reproaches the " ver-libristes " with a lack of form : assonance is not necessary, he declares, and rhymes may be masculine and feminine. The strict rules of visual rhyme must relax to the extent of letting a singular and a plural word constitute a permissible rhyme, and the " e " mute rule in syllable counting must disappear.

In prose as in poetry the naïveté of Jammes' expression recalls in more ways than one the qualities of the *Fioretti* of St. Francis : the truth of this is borne upon one in reading *Le roman du lièvre.*

Introduced by the quivering beauty of the Angelus beating " with its blue wing the torrid whiteness of the belfrey," the siesta of the hare begins ; a picture dream, seen through the eyes of animal creation, of St. Francis of Assisi wandering over the Pyrenees and calling wild creatures to follow him; of his return to Paradise ; and the way in which each animal reached its own Paradise, the hare last of all, because the shot that made him one with all created things was fired only when he became once more conscious of the brake which jogged along the highway where his sleep began.

Nor is there a clear line of demarcation between his prose and poetry. Indeed, in *Le Triomphe de la Vie,* descriptive details and conversation are introduced with all the popular turns of speech they would have in prose.

Rigorously, then, Jammes stood outside every school and he has no real disciples. To some extent, he is of the posterity of the Romantics ; perhaps, also, in his sensitiveness and in his passion he is distantly related to Baudelaire. Withal, these traits are combined with a realism that makes him, in the literary sense, the heir of none, a reaction rather against the obscurities of the Symbolists. Unusual alliances of the most usual words, no effort at poetry, but poetry at its truest and finest, spontaneous and fresh, with the exhilarating, unspoiled beauty of the mountains, "as soon as one goes to Francis Jammes, it seems as if he alone were a poet." (André Gide). MINA J. MOORE, M.A., D.Litt.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

I HAVE borrowed for the title of this article a phrase by which Greek documents, if I remember rightly, published on the last day of one month and the first day of the next were officially dated. It is not inappropriate to the date of this article's appearance in THE POETRY REVIEW or to the subject-matter, poetry old and poetry new—in one case painfully "modern."

There are sundry people who are ever feverishly on the outlook for the arrival of the next poet of the first rank. (Let me, for convenience, borrow for him the immortal name "Snodgrass.") They are impelled by two motives. They hope to write on the margin of the roll of Fame their own little names as the discoverers of the great "Snodgrass." And, being under the delusion that Keats in his life-time received nothing but utter neglect or contemptuous abuse they fear the derision of posterity if they fail to recognize "Snodgrass's" genius. They have heard of the attacks by *Blackwood* and *The Quarterly*, but they are ignorant of the fact that when those attacks were made the poems which are Keats's everlasting monument had not been given to the world. *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* had not been published, and *Hyperion*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, the great Odes, and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* had not even been written.

Anxious to be on the safe side, these seekers, in the words of Holy Writ, run about crying "Lo here! Lo there!" And so the discoveries of "Snodgrasses" are not infrequent. I wonder how many stand to the credit (or otherwise) of the Editor of that unintentionally funny paper, *New Verse*. (I am told that he is an able man and normally a competent reviewer, but his weak spot seems to be his idea that he has a special *flair* for finding and unearthing the buried truffles of new poetic talent.)

This preamble brings me to the latest book of Mr. Dylan Thomas, *The Map of Love*, (Dent, 7s. 6d.). His first poems were received with enthusiasm in some quarters. He owed this success partly to his nationality. Restrained and judicious discrimination about things Welsh is not a

notorious characteristic of his gifted fellow-countrymen. And, as his poems certainly belong to the class called "difficult," they appealed strongly to the people who love to puzzle out such verse because the reading of meanings into the meaningless subconsciously gratifies their appreciation of their own powers of imagination.

> "Unconscious victims of self-flattery
> They minister to their own vanity."

I note that the Oxford Professor of Poetry in his inaugural lecture hinted at the existence of such sufferers from the Narcissus-complex.

Mr. Thomas's latest book consists of sixteen poems and seven short prose-sketches. The publishers affirm that "in a number of the poems he has made a considerable advance out of his past obscurity into a new clarity of vision and expression." Well, here is a fair sample of Mr. Thomas's progress to lucidity.

> On no work of words now for three lean months in the bloody
> Belly of the rich year and the big purse of my body
> I bitterly take to task my poverty and craft:
> To take to give is all, return what is hungrily given
> Puffing the pounds of manna up through the dew to heaven
> The lovely gift of the gab bangs back on a blind shaft.
>
> To lift to leave from the treasures of man is pleasing death
> That will rake at last all currencies of the marked breath
> And count the taken, forsaken mysteries in a bad dark.
>
> To surrender now is to pay the expensive ogre twice.
> Ancient woods of my blood, dash down to the nut of the seas.
> If I take to burn or return this world which is each man's work.

At the risk of incurring the contempt of posterity I will say, with that ancient Quarterly Reviewer, "This will never do." With so rich a literature at our disposal, who—barring the Narcissists, the puzzle-hunters, and the seekers after "Snodgrass"—will spend time on such "clotted nonsense"?

I take this turgid bombast to mean that the author is grumbling that he hasn't been inspired to write anything

lately. It seems to be a muddled, subconscious remembrance of Milton's words :

> " That one talent which 'tis death to hide
> Lodged in me useless."

But the prose of Mr. Thomas seems to me to be on a different plane. His stories are not pleasant reading. They are obsessed with sex-symbolism and with the haunting nightmares of the fever-stricken and the insane. But they show traces of strange, imaginative power which reminds me at times of Edgar Allan Poe. If Mr. Thomas's inspiration endures and does not fade out—as such inspiration is so liable to wither—with the passing of youth, he may some day achieve a great novel.

It is very meet and right that translations of poetry from an alien tongue should be made by poets, and Mr. R. C. Trevelyan has qualified for that rank. He has now given us, through the Cambridge University Press at 2s. 6d. apiece, accurate and readable renderings of two of the most famous of the Greek poetic dramas, *Prometheus* and *Medea*. He affirms that he has attempted to reproduce " the form, phrasing and movement of the original," allowing as far as possible for the difference between quantitative and accented metre. I think that he has had some success, for his Euripides seems to run more freely than his Aeschylus. Now, the language of Aeschylus is grandiloquent, austere, rigid. Very rarely does he avail himself of that principle of Greek metre which counts two short syllables as one long one. But Euripides did so very freely, and thereby extended greatly his available choice of words and therewith his power of portraying the thoughts and feelings of every-day life. That is why Mrs. Browning called him

> " Our Euripides the human,
> With his touches of things common."

I would not quite rank these renderings with Morshead's classic translation of the Aeschylean trilogy, but they can be read with pleasure.

Mr. Sackville Martin informs us that his volume of sonnets called *Idle Hours* (Rich and Cowan, 5s.), was written in answer to a poet-friend who challenged him to write a sonnet "if he knew what that meant." But Mr. Martin's craftsmanship makes me strongly suspect that for long before that challenge he had been secretly addicted to the habit of verse-writing. His sonnets are mostly pictures of the scenery of Scotland, of Durham, and of the Mediterranean, from Spain to the Isles of Greece. He is not the "Snodgrass" of whom I have spoken above, but his sonnets can be read and re-read by the ordinary lover of poetry with pleasure. Two or three of them may be commended to the attention of the compilers of anthologies.

My only censure of his work is upon a point of technique. It seems to me that too often he has been content with the first rhyme that came to hand. (I sometimes feel that Blake, that wayward genius, was likewise too readily satisfied.) I have a perhaps childish liking for an occasional rhyme that is not of the "cat" "sat" "mat" quality, but clinches the line with a mouth-filling word, words like "deliverance," "sepulture," "yester-year," "inviolate," "cavalcade," "antagonist," "revindicated," "heritage," "citadel," "impenitent," "multitudinous." I am convinced that rhyme often prompts the imagination. It is interesting to look for hints of this in the great poems. And so, though I have never myself used a rhyming dictionary, I have more than once presented that help to budding poets who have done me the honour of seeking my criticism and advice.

Here, in *The Lost Temple*, is a typical sample of Mr. Martin's work.

> Strange weeds and thorns and swamps have choked the ways
> That once were roads by which a countless throng
> Came bearing banners, singing songs of praise,
> To the loud booming of the temple gong.
> And long forgotten, carved in rust-red stone
> In the ghost-haunted wood that temple stands;
> Its crowds of grinning gods are left alone
> On roofs and walls, served by no priestly hands.
> Their staring eyes, their slow and secret smiles,
> Mock their desertion through the sunlit hours

Their whispered thoughts of days the night beguiles,
Days when their necks were garlanded with flowers.
Now but one giant lizard slowly crawls
The mouldering steps of their deserted halls.

I do not present this as a great poem, but I would like to have a postcard vote by The Poetry Society as to the respective merits of this poem and of the one by Mr. Dylan Thomas, which I selected in an honest attempt to give a characteristic example of his work. The Poetry Society is the largest corporate body of poetry-lovers in the world and its members annually attest their faith by levying upon themselves a monetary contribution equal to that required for a permit to listen to radiated broadcasts and considerably in excess of the cost of a dog-licence. Their verdict should carry weight.

More than once in reading the poetry of Mr. Michael Roberts I have met a line of the kind that " arrests the mind and lingers in the ear." I cannot say that I have found any of these in his latest volume, *Orion Marches* (Faber and Faber, 6s.), though occasionally there comes a line that one would like to read aloud. The poems are written in a mood of severe austerity. There hangs over them an atmosphere of grim foreboding and suspense like that in which we wait when we have been warned of an air-raid. They are not easy reading. I sympathize with the reviewer in a great literary journal who, while he gave the poems generous appreciation, said that " some of Mr. Roberts's hidden references remain tantalizingly obscure." But this obscurity is not due to the shallowness which makes so much " modernist " poetry unintelligible. A shallow pool is more likely to be muddied and clouded than a deep one. I seem in reading the poetry of Mr. Roberts to be overhearing the voice of a man thinking aloud to himself. But it is the voice of a man who really does think. Few living poets have Mr. Roberts's intellectual equipment.

Here are some lines typical of his mood :

" It is a dark country where the spirit wanders
Feeling the cold stones and the uneven path,

Moving between dim shrubs and clasping thorns
Travelling with frightened silence for an escort."

I wish that I had space to print his *The Inundation*, a vivid picture of the sea bursting over the land, but symbolic of the present times. The book ends with a series of scenes, designed for recitation, illustrating The Life of Chingis Khan, the conqueror of a vaster part of the earth than any other man recorded in history.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

THE GRAVEN IMAGE

THEY dim the lights at gloaming,
Spread sibilant wings as though of pigeons homing
On secret service bent,
Severing space wide-eyed and reticent,
They trench their grave-like furrows,
Desolate human burrows
To fill them with disaster panic-pent,
And plant the rooftops with their menacing guns
And man them with their pale unwilling sons.

These, troubled in life's morning
Laugh to repel day's crimson-studded warning,
And fling the ball with zest,
Toss on the surf and top the mountain crest,
Or spend the time of waiting
Dancing and roller-skating,
Turning their backs on the persistent guest
Who all-unmoving, all-unspeaking stands
A gas mask and a death mask in his hands.

And in the chapels of our Holy Altars
Suitors of righteousness and her defaulters
Plead for an earthly calm
And joy's hosannas and the lifted palm,
But all their loves are partial
And all their trusts are martial
Articulate in a war-glorious Psalm,
And how can they observe an equal tryst
With Israel's God of Battles and with—CHRIST?

J. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

THE EXILE

HOW the heart longs for it to be evening,
The peopled light abhors
And acreless solitude adores.

Autumn of day, unpanoplied and mute
Its riches inward turn,
The people go : lamp, eye and thinking burn

Now quenchless with their long flame, feed on night.
Mysterious and proud,
The spirit shakes off day's amorphous cloud

And, gull-like, drops in silence down steep time,
Falls, falls, and with fierce eyes
Hunts in the caves of the eternities.

How the heart longs for it to be evening—
Then neither owned nor caged,
The long nostalgia of the light assuaged.

E. RADCLIFFE BINNINGTON.

THE TRANQUIL MIND

THE quiet earth is here unchanged and still,
The rose upon her breast is crimson-lipped
With sweets whereof the searching bee has sipped,
There's sun and wind and heather on the hill.

And music lives uplifting man from man
Until his soul, untouchable, is far
From sounds of war as some lone, single star,
With wholeness of a perfect rainbow span.

The spoken word and words bright-winged with rhyme,
A silent thought, an understanding touch,
A look, a gesture : these that mean so much
Are with us yet enduring through all time.

And though the soft, green dusks and dawns are flown
Until we sleep and wake again in fear,
The morning comes with blessings morning-clear
That cannot die and leave us not alone.

PHOEBE RAYNER.

THE POET OF FRUSTRATION

TEN remarkable pieces, perhaps the most telling expression of men's fears and hopes during the second decade of this century' are here presented with introduction, parallel translation, and commentary,—RAINER MARIA RILKE, *Duino Elegies*, J. B. Leishman & Stephen Spender, (Hogarth Press). The bulk of the work is Mr. Leishman's, Mr. Spender being responsible for a second version of the poems, over which his collaborator has worked. The façade of unity is convincing. Great care has been taken to preserve the order of the words, and the pieces in strict blank verse reach often a level of authentic inspiration, notably in the fourth and eighth elegies :

O Bäume Lebens, o wann winterlich ?
O trees of life, when will your winter come ?

The almost Tennysonian inner cadences of Rilke's verse, as in the line about the gnat, *O Glück der Mücke, die noch innen hüpft*, defy reproduction, and have wisely been left alone. The *spiritual* content has been the first aim of *these* renderers, and no one with a sense of the problem involved can doubt that they have judged fairly.

To what does this spiritual content amount ? That is the question for us now; for that Rilke was a person of exceptional poetic endowment and that these elegies are his *Testament of Beauty* are self-evident truths. You have only to look at the way each opens to see that. They are the maturest flowering of a tree that could not but bear poetry. *The Unknown Eros* is perhaps their nearest English equivalent (think of " Beautiful habitations, auras of delight ! "), but the torturing self-inquisition of Hopkins is here as well as Patmore's robust faith, and there are things like the acrobat piece, inspired by Picasso, which are hardly parallelled by the later Yeats or the worldlier vision of Bridges. And few poems since Goethe have started with the immediacy of

With all its eyes the creature-world beholds
the open.

Yeats might strike that chord, but he could not keep it sounding for a page. And what of a phrase like " staying is nowhere " or the bat's flight *durchs Porzellan des Abends* ? These are *new* wonders ; criticism is silent here.

It is only when the book is closed, and eye and mind are no longer at the mercy of its individual disparate beauties that any doubt of intrinsic worth suggests itself. What is the burden of all this heart-work? This relentless introspection, this *pacing* of nature, what is its ultimate yield ? " We don't feel very securely at home within our interpreted world." Yes, *exactly* that. The whole of existence is darkened by a shadow, a womb. It is as if a gigantic VERBOTEN were set up, within which, and limited by which, beauty may alone be perceived by the elect. Whether this sense of frustration be due to implicit Roman Catholic dogma, or to the macabre concept of death that haunts German art from Dürer to Richard Strauss, or to Rilke's persistent interpretation of nature in terms of human emotions (the pathetic

fallacy, of which " the landscape of Lamentation " in the last elegy is an excellent instance), it cannot be denied that the crucifixion rather than the resurrection of mankind preponderates here. The acrobat's smile is conditioned and limited by the agonies of his performance ; it is no longer that bloom on ripe things which the Greek saw as pleasure. Even when an animal's gaze is discovered to be " unintrospective, pure "—Keats's seagull was " unintellectual, yet divine to me "—still " the weight and care of a great sadness " must lie *within* the animal ! After all, you cannot have it both ways, and the poet's friend Kassner seems to have had an inkling of this dilemma. Poetic thought clothes and reclothes itself according to recurrent shibboleths ; the complaint of the neglected lover to his mistress's eyebrow reappears centuries later as a cry of despair against cosmic limitations ; the Prometheus of the post-revolution era is recognizable as the " angel " of these elegies. That is but natural, but often the new clothes hang loosely, if not unnecessarily, on the old figure. The first fifteen lines of the last elegy are but an expansion and a weakening of Goethe's four about him who eats not his bread with tears ; and is not the figure that stands so imposingly in the fourth, the doll, fully anticipated by Mrs. Solness in *The Masterbuilder* ? And, to come nearer home :

Who's turned us round like this, so that we always,
do what we may, retain the attitude
of someone who's departing ? Just as he,
on the last hill, that shows him all his valley
for the last time, will turn and stop and linger,
we live our lives, for ever taking leave.

What is that but a self-conscious, elaborated version of

—Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips,
Bidding adieu

in the *Ode on Melancholy*? But that is not to say that Rilke was not the best poet of his time, a time when the scientific products of man's imagination had benighted its creative rapture. It is worth noting that this is the second translation of the Duino Elegies to be published by the Hogarth Press ; the first, printed at Weimar, was by E. and V. Sackville West.

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN.

Verse-writing members who deplore the suspension of the *Cornhill* and *Windsor Magazines*, which were always considerate of good new verse, have been asking for advice on new markets. English requirements are very restricted : a wider, more receptive field may be found in the United States and Canada. We mentioned lately a handlist recently published, and advertised in THE POETRY REVIEW, and would also suggest that *The Writers' and Artists' Year Book* (Black) would be found most useful and informative. It gives a comprehensive directory of publications and their needs, with special reference to markets for verse.

PITTER AND PAT POEMS

IN *Time's Wall Asunder* (Sheed and Ward) if we may liken Roibeárd O Faracháin (Robert Farran) to fly-half in a rugger team, we should find a swift player, with sensitive hands, magnificent footwork and a grasp of the finest play. Instinctively we should cry—" Oh good man "—as he made the opening for a " Try."

As with all Irish poets, that third unknown quantity of X is present, not religion, not themselves, but that haunting " other presence " which inevitably lays its spell of beauty and bids us " follow the gleam." Who but they would meet " Rich Morning " in just this way:

" I could feel the time turn round.
The tree's thought ran through me,
each one said,

" Spring's coming—that's her sky,
the sun rose HER way
to-day,
That's her west wind
with the quiver in it
like young fire."

Then in " Literary Conversation," something completely different; laughing, agile footwork, outmanoeuvring the full back! Again, the music in this:

" O riches in my soul remembering, when Annalilla walks my way glissando of guitars in Granada, shawls on a canoe-stacked quay."

How instinctively this is " Bean ná Feaca " (Woman never seen). If any critic survives the " scrum " (which he shouldn't!) after reading " Poet's Curse," good luck to the imperishable monster! Finally we find the " touch line " in these lovely poems:

" Witness," " Mary," " Vocation," " Manchild."

Vivian Forbes (Wilding and Son, Shrewsbury) painter and poet found, as all artists must, that in every expression of art, be it dancing, sculpture, music or painting, that poetry is an indispensable part. In his pictures the colours, the figures and the lines are poetry; and inversely, his poetry is filled with blues and golds and breath-colours.

" This night is faint with ecstasy,
And where the Heavens stillest are—
Across the blue immensity—
A star is singing to a star."

As we close the covers of this soldier's book, how deeply we could wish that fate had prolonged this life.

Opening a new volume of poems, is not unlike opening the door of a china shop. The wind may blow violently and before we realize what has happened, a modern vase of immense proportion may descend on our innocent heads. It may be an excellent theory that we should

have this experience before we die, but there is in us all, a tendency towards dying to-morrow! But there is always a chance of reaching our goal safely and we learn which writer makes it possible. Ruth Pitter has again opened our door with the wisdom we have learned to trust. In *The Spirit Watches* (Cresset Press) she gives us time to search among the treasures on the shelves; to exclaim as we find the exquisite curves of a Kommaromi, or the birds of a Lalique. We are happy and at ease; the images are clear and beautiful, the colours warm, compelling; and we know that no pathway is too full of thorns that she would fear to tread, for the sake of finding that depth of sympathy and uplifting grace, which is the perfectness of her work:

"Here our long pain is justified;
See where large consolation stands
Perfect in love, pure from all pride,
Clothed on with eyes, and limbs, and hands.

I feel this strength bound to my bones,
This heroism in my blood;
In my own breast this pity groans,
This stillness is my solitude.

Swift from my heart to my own heart,
From life to life come home the whole
Fair truth to the immortal part,
Sweet truth to the eternal soul."

If space permitted we would quote "An Old-fashioned Song"; "The Difference"; and the wealth of understanding in "1938." Lastly we pause on the exquisite thought this great English Poet has given us in *The Bird in the Tree* where she tells us that if our love were a complete thing, the sublime moment would be eternal.

From overseas there are books from Africa, Australia, India and Canada. Is it for nothing, that we find St. Francis and his Order mentioned at least seven times in *Africa: Verses* (Oxford University Press, 6s.). Is there not some affinity of living between this poet scholar-missionary who humbly walks and works, loving as St. Francis did, all things both great and small?

"Bright in the slanting light we come
Bearing our rustling grass-sheaves high
Against the splendour of the sky."

With the scent of the sweet grass in our nostrils, African sky above us and native workmen busy with their padre, we see a poet living his daily poetry, feeling its rhythm:

"Beat! Beat! Beat!
Drum, that dost set our feet
Stepping a-step with Spring!"

" No Thoroughfare " though the shaft drives deep, is a poem that no-one should miss reading. In the final " Mors African " the simple pathos of the African faith echoes in these child words :

" How cool and soft the earth and grass, how fast
Our sleep—our courses run—
God knows if lost or won."

Mr. Cripps has indeed folded a part of Africa between the leaves of his book.

With *Into The Desert*, by Paul Hasluck (Freshwater Bay Press, W.A.), we are away for Australia, the wind fresh and invigorating ! Throughout the book, is the deep desire to reach Truth. We doubt if the subject in *The Middle-Aged in Spring* seems really worthy of so great a purpose ; but amongst the Lyrics, especially " A Sequence " it is handled with naïve simplicity and beauty. But best of all is the last half-spoken, half-sung song of the Australian farmer:

" Ache of muscles, heat and dust, slashing mulga for mile on mile in a desolate land."

We can see the fodder grass crashing in the mullening ; slash and sweat ; the thirst and the bed-rock of living ; then the open smile lifted toward Heaven, " Home sweet home. The whole world for a parlour roofed by the sky."

We who live in war-shadowed cities are worthy of our metal if we find we can grip and hold that strong brown hand of Australia :

" A song of the strongly-beating heart, the free mind, the rough hand of courage, of friendship of goodness."

Joseph Furtado, author of *A Goan Fiddler*, " Primeiros Versos " has now given us another book, *Songs in Exile* (Commercial Printing Works, Poona). The pages are full of intimate pictures of the scenery and home life that surrounds the poet:

" Land of palm and cashew-tree
Dear as life art thou to me ! "

Louise Morey Bowman has just had *Characters in Cadence* published by Macmillans :

" The garden was beautiful and old and still ;
Deep violet shadows lay upon the grass
Valerian and small dark pansies bloomed
Like weird sensations of remembered dreams."

And in this setting we find ourselves lying full length upon the grass, listening intently to this poet who weaves us stories, strange and lovely in experience. It is thus we steal " a snow-white day in a brown earthly seven " and this day does not last nearly long enough. Like satisfied children we ask for another story and yet another. Then someone asks, " And now you have heard these stories what do you know ? " We know that we hold a changing picture in a magic

sky-lined frame, where the world's tiny people live out their love, their sorrow and their fame.

"I taunted him and flaunted him—
But oh! at night I crept
And laid my cheek against his hand—
It was myself that wept."

We come home from strange lands, people and customs, to a strange poet who puts humour and pathos page to page. Well, why not? It would be difficult to answer and those of us who read Richard Seymour's first book (*Rhymes Unreasoned*) are accustomed to this rather unusual procedure. It is perhaps best to let the author illustrate his own style, by quoting from *Shaded Candles*

'Ancient and Modern
Sir Norman Arch whose country seat
Is Crumbles, Rottingdean,
Said, kneeling at his charmer's feet,
'Oh! Wilt thou be my Queen?'

Miss Belle Tullulah Cutie-Hoy
White Ladies, Tenessee,
Responded briefly 'Attaboy!
It's all O.K. by me.'

Then appositionally:

In this strange world of wonder was it meant
That they who thought no ill and did no crime
Must suffer wrong and that a child's lament
Should sound forever on the paths of time?

There is insufficient space to quote this poem in full, but the two examples show the profound sympathy that this adroit humorist also portrays.

This résumé of really good recent publications ends with two books which almost take the form of a benediction. In them like a thread running from cover to cover is an attitude of chivalry towards the severe tests which life gives to all people. Margaret Chadwick in *Milord* (Heath Cranton) sustains her song on this great theme, though she reaches her truest measure in the Sonnets. Why only five? We must hope that she will produce more of these, through which her thoughts like birds of passage reach the homeland with a sense of irrefutable rest. In *Dark Storm* there are many lovely glimpses of the mountains and the enchantment of "Over the hills and far away" as also there are the joys and tragedy of great love, handled with quiet restraint. At such times as these, many readers will find a harbour of understanding in Jean Ferris' book (Rich & Cowan, 4s. 6d.).

E. M. Stephenson.

TWO PARNASSIANS

WHEN a Surrealist artist paints a picture for our delight, we may be certain that in one corner of the canvas he will place a sea-shell. The sea-shell of course is obtained from Mr. W. J. Turner. It is found once again in his *Selected Poems* (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.); together with the volcanoes, the velvet tigers, the crimson parrots, the hairy leaves, the amethyst mountains, moonlight roses, princesses buried in sand, snow-throated orchids, black and marble djinn, coral bodies, dim gigantic blooms and the myriad other fantastic creations which admirers of this poet have learned to expect in profusion. There is always beauty, but a cool and hard beauty in these poems, and the air of a wind constantly blowing, the vital profusion of a tropical forest—but yet no impression of its warmth. It is as if one looked at the forest from a great distance—or in a dream. The "odorous coasts of sandal" are there, but they are pale, and

> "the sad quadroon
> Swims as languid as the flame of a candle
> Moving invisibly at noon."

One doubts if even the candle would burn one very badly. The effect of such a profusion of life without warmth is very strange and indelibly marks out the work of this poet. His vision of Beauty is in

> "a flowery grove,
> Where walks with curls, than foam more fleecy white,
> That crystal Quarry, whose eyes of sourceless light,
> Are bubbles of earth's melancholy love."

Mr. Turner, like any true poet, hates the bourgeoisie and castigates that wretched middle class in a poem called *Saturday*. This is enough to make any bourgeois sit up and take notice; it is, however, too long to quote, which is a pity because the more I read it the more I am convinced that it is directed not only against the bourgeois, but against everybody. "Let me make clear once for all," (he says), "How I detest my friends." Well—the feeling is not foreign to us on occasion.

If I had to bank on one name that is likely to survive in verse beyond the fevered stupidity even of these times, I should be inclined to stake a chance on John Gawsworth. I feel that when a poet puts so much of himself into his work as this man does people will not readily forget him. Whether they like or dislike the self is quite another matter. Gawsworth is in his poems especially in the last batch, *New Poems*, (Martin Secker, 5s.) to an extent greater certainly I think than is any living poet I can call to mind; and I believe this gives his book more survival-value even than the Benson Medal of the Royal Society of Literature, which it has recently been awarded.

Fire and burning energy and arrogance—these three things are here. If the emotion seems stressed at times to a false ring, what is that but the old trick of sophistication denying that fire burns? Some of these poems came out of nothing but a white heat,—"Fodder," "The

Gadfly," "Dictator," and above all the lovely "Inconstancy"—too long to quote.

I think there is an advance on this writer's previous work in this, that all superfluity has been beaten off, a real starkness of outline achieved, a minimum quantity of words. I do not mean that I have found his work verbose, but that the economy here is unusual. "Grand Seigneur" shows it well:

"Who holds Aquitaine?
"I, the straw-bedded."
"Who denies the rain?"
"I, the wind-wedded."
"Whose Furl is without stain?
Whose crop is without grain?
Whose power is on the wane?"
"Mine, no more dreaded.
So ho, land-leaguer,
Twisted Intriguer,
Ride back to your Master!
For years seven
I've rid toward Heaven;
But you will ride Hell-home faster!"

T. Weston Ramsey.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Louis Frechette, patriot poet of French Canada, almost 2,000 persons in the Windsor Hotel, Montreal, on November 29th, saw Mrs. Honore Mercier, daughter of the poet, give two manuscripts written by the poet to a representative of the Quebec Government. Anecdotes of the life of the poet were told by Senator Raoul Dandurand, who was his personal friend, and by Maxime Raymond, M.P. for Beauharnois-Chateauguay. Paul LeDuc, who married a granddaughter of the poet, declared that Frechette was the first French-Canadian writer who was able to interpret on paper the colour and atmosphere of this land and the longings of the French-Canadian people. The Poetry Society and the English poets of Montreal were represented by Mrs. F. H. Sproule, who read an original poem dedicated to the memory of Louis Frechette.

The new books reviewed and advertised in each issue of The Poetry Review may be examined in The Poetry Society's Library at 33 Portman Square, W.1. Arrangements have been made for the borrowing of books from the Library. Members may also open a book account for the purchase of volumes not easily obtainable through local booksellers. They will be supplied at the net published price plus postage. A Book Room also will be opened at 33 Portman Square, W.1, for the sale of books of poetry, new and old; if supported it will be made a permanent exhibition of the latest publications—a comprehensive poetry book shop with a bargain counter of surplus copies.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXXII

Arthur Crew Inman's sixth book, *None Now are Quietly Wise* (Dutton & Co., New York), comes to us after a number of years of silence, and in this book the tight rope of the intellect unites with the life-line of the heart and emotions find worthy words. This is the way in which those who know, like Gamaliel Bradford, of the *New York Evening Post*, write of Inman's poetry: "The true stuff for American poets is here, that is, American life. The blank verse is dynamic, organic, constantly seeking to adapt itself to new, subtle, evasive emotional stress."

A fine sonnet is: "Pen in Hand":

When years behind outnumber those before;
When, as with the climber of upmounting hills,
Perspective alters size until no more
That which was large so large an aspect fills;
When swift emotion has by careful thought
Been checked, or full destroyed, or chained away;
When that judicial toleration sought
By sages has from black and white made grey
The limning of life's intricate unfolding;
When years behind outnumber those before,—
Then what is there to write which does not ring
As hollow as the closing of a door
Upon all joy, all zest, all revelry,
Leaving a windless, moonless, world to me?

Who has not dealt with the thoughts in "Miniature":

It is as though you leave behind
A gracious shadow for my mind
To dwell upon, while you are gone,
Lest I should lonely turn, forlorn.

It is as though you leave with me,
That my adoring eyes may see,
A mirrored vision of your grace,
Of haunting smile, of elfin face.

It is as though you leave behind
Yourself, lest I in pain grow blind
With peering through the fleeting years,
With seeking through the weary tears.

It is as though you leave with me
A charm against eternity,
A reason why, a touch, a kiss,
An unshut door to memoried bliss.

First among these spirited poems is "Altar of Fire." We quote from it:

The chimneys point to the smoky sky
And the red fires throb and glow

And the hot steel runs and the hammers crash
And a million sparks in birth-pangs fly;
And this I know,
Eh-eh-ho,
That sweating men and wheels that slash
And this deft hand of mine
In symphony combine,
In beauty and in power flow,
That America may grow.

* * *

The chimneys point to the smoky sky,
And sprockets wear, and men die,
And all that is passes, and is gone,
And new steel is forged, and new men are born,
And the heart of industry beats on
In epic beat
Like thudding feet;
And the red fires throb and glow,
And this I know,
Eh-eh-ho,
That sweating men and wheels that meet
And this deft hand of mine
In symphony combine,
In beauty and in power flow,
That America may grow!

In a Preface to *Ghost Song*, A Western Folk Play, by Anna Burns, John Ashby Conway writes: "It is peculiarly gratifying to find that a number of American playwrights are turning to folk expression of dramatic material."

Anne Burns writes of her play: "The word *folk* is applied to all drama 'earth-rooted in the life of the common people.' Localisms, legends, songs, superstitions and environmental conflicts are the basic elements of folk plays. Shakespeare introduced folklore into many of his plays; fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream;* witches in *Macbeth;* ghosts in *Hamlet*. Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* is based on Scandinavian folklore. *Ghost Song* is based on the ghost dance, and the weird, poignant song which accompanied it. This song and dance originated among the Painte Indians in the Mohave Desert, and the song, the dance, and its messiah are as definitely of the desert as the wild beaches, the dwarf pines and the mocassin flowers that cling to the stark hillsides."

Miss Burns sets her stage with nine characters and with marked ability for characterization we learn to know them very rapidly. After reading the play we will never forget Jake and Lequella—lovers—who, through the dark days of the uncertainty that followed persistently the trail of the Indian, shared their tragic fate.

In the second act she appears again in his cabin, after sorrowful

experiences. He orders all to leave and believing her to be still living, Jake kneels beside her. Her face has been covered. Jake makes his prayer, and says: "Lequella, Lequella."

(*He speaks very softly and expectantly, waiting motionless as if confident she will respond.*)

"Now we will go up to that shining mountain, and sit together on that shining mountain; there we will watch the Sun go down in beauty from that shining place.

"There we will sit, 'till the Night Traveller arises in beauty about the shining mountain'; we will watch him as he climbs to the beautiful skies.

"We will watch the little Stars following their chief.
We will watch the Northern Lights playing their game of ball in their cold, glistening country.
There we will sit, on the beautiful mountain, and listen to the Thunder beating his drums.
We will see the flashes from the lit pipe of the Lightning.
We will see the great Whirlwind race with the squall.
There we will sit, until all creatures drowse.
There we will hear the great Owl sing his usual song:
'Go-to-sleep-all,' and see all animals obey his call.
There we will sit in beauty on the mountain, and watch the small stars in their sleepless flight.
They do not mind the song, 'Go-to-sleep-all'; neither will we mind it, but sit more closely together, and think of nothing but ourselves."

(*Frustrated and bewildered by the awful silence that somehow clings about the dead he speaks to her again, louder, and more desperately.*)

"Lequella, answer me! Speak to me!

(*He turns and walks to the window*)

"I have healed the sick—and it is written that Lazarus walked—walked by the power of Him who scattered the hoar frost like ashes on these sleeping hills."

Miss Burns since writing *Ghost Song* has written with John Ashby Conway an historical play in six episodes, *Robert Burns*, of which we will speak in another review.

Sixteen volumes precede Faith Vilas's *Certificate of Flight*, (Loker Raley, New York). The first poem in the book is the title poem and we give the first stanza:

As warranty of flight
I wear engraved upon my mind,
The golden-square geometry of grain,
The angled green of clover . . .
And over them and over . . .
The purple bruises of too intimate a cloud
Blown on a summer wind.

We at once recognize a vivid, vibrant personality, and are not disappointed as we go on through this collection. The hurricane that swept many beautiful gardens away, houses, trees, boats, people, Mrs. Vilas has remembered in " Hurricane." Of this we give the first and last two stanzas :

Last night the horsemen of the sea
Rode in, their stallions prancing high,
The plumes they shook upon their casques
Shut out the sky. . . .

I could no longer see ; nor hear
Above the shattering rhythmic beat ;
So cannot say what turned them back,
Who sounded the retreat.

I only know my small house stood
Fragile, upon its mound of land,
While where last night my neighbour slept
Is level sand.

Mrs. Vilas has sent us interesting comment on poetry as an audible art :

" ' Fools step in ' as we are told, and until the casual reader of poetry learns that he is pursuing an art as exacting and definite as any other, to which thought and training and a natural aptitude for balance must be contributed, we may find the poor reader ranks with the poor listener as the foremost factors in stripping poetry of its rightful heritage."

Touching on the everlasting overflowing reserves of this universe, this writer expresses it in " Always Deep Waters Flowed " :

Always deep waters flowed below the land,
Waiting the tilt of the divining rod
That broke the desert-brought, and spurred the sod
To green obliteration of the sand.

Always below the strata flowed the oil,
Waiting the twisted urgence of the drill
That bored earth's deepest artery, until
A liquid force geysered above the soil.

Man has not tapped his final vein of power,
Vast forces wait on his maturing sight,
Slowly the needle moves upon the hour.
When thought shall pierce the artery of light.

Though Quick Souls Bleed, by Gordon LeClaire, comes from Banner Press, Atlanta, Ga. This brilliant Canadian poet who found review in our magazine some two years ago is welcomed by us again. One of

Mr. LeClaire's commentators speaks of his similarity to Siegfried Sassoon in his songs on the cruelties of war: "Unlike Milton, he can carve beautiful figurenes from cherry-stones. Here are spiritual love-lyrics, here are social passion and love of mankind."

Let us read what Gordon LeClaire says to-day of poetry:

"I have always felt that the poet, perhaps more than any other artist, should possess that miracle of vision which 'sees life steadily and sees it whole.' For it is only by viewing life in such 'whole-some' perspective that we are enabled to appraise the relative importance of its intrinsic values. A poet must not allow his vision to become warped or myopic if he wishes to project in his poetry that integrity of personality which is the authentic hall-mark of greatness. We must so orientate our beings that we may be able to comprehend both the beautiful and the sordid, the real and the ideal, the exaltation and the despair, the laughter and the tears, as well as the myriad transitional stages which intervene between these two extremes. Moreover, we must possess an all-embracing sympathy if our songs are to be truly 'representative of the action and the character of those who live in our age and speak our language.'

"As I have said in my *Song of the Spirit*—to be aureoled with greatness poetry must accomplish more than merely the mirroring of life as it is; more than the intimate dissection and graphic description of the multiform processes of nature; it must do more than project a definite poetic mood in terms of truth and beauty; it must, in some measure, make the human soul more acutely aware of its own relationship to the world of nature in general and to its fellow-beings and the Supreme Being in particular. It must awaken in the heart some awareness, however slight, of the glorious destiny which humankind is capable of achieving, of the transcendental union of spirit between individuals and nations which alone possesses the power to transform a darkling, war-stalked world into a veritable Edenland of happiness and soul-satisfaction. The soul of a true poet must be as 'sensitive as antennae that magnetize electrons from the air,' as he is a living channel through which flows that inspiring sublimity of vision and prophetic power which I believe can well be, and is, a most potent factor in linking mankind to that Divine Source of Being and Beauty which we call God.

"Thus when we read lines fraught with such a ravishment of rhythmic beauty that the keen eyes blur, we must know that our spirits sing in unison with the kindred being who penned them, and through him we are united in that immortal brotherhood whose soulsongs voice the theme of the Symphony of Creation."

The book opens with a very dramatic poem entitled "A Half-Caste Prays." We give the first and the last stanzas:

" Forgive, O God, the occidental anger
Fomenting through these veins, a seething flood
Which vies with cool of oriental languor
To form a bristling murk in mongrel blood. . . .

" O Christian God, I'd hail this hybrid chrism
As one whom cleansing tongues of fire baptize,
If You would only halt this vengeful schism—
Subdue my soul to match these almond eyes ! "

This poet luxuriates in richly packing each line. His love of colour and expression in regard to colour mark him as a painter. His sense of the dramatic is at present finding expression in Montreal, where he directs a Drama Group and is a specialist in English literature. He is also an active member of the Montreal Repertory Theatre which has featured him in several plays.

Robert Silliman Hillyer, *In Time of Mistrust* (printed at Harvard University Press) needs no introduction to the reading world. A host of fine volumes stand to his credit. He was the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for the best book of verse published in America in 1933. The present slender volume *In Time of Mistrust* is an ode delivered before the Alpha Chapter of the Phi Beta Cappa at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, this December. There are fourteen sonnets in this sequence. The reach of them is indicated by the following : the first :

This is no idle rhetoric to reach
Your ears for this occasion, though I use
Some figures that are common to our speech,
Some noble words made weak with long abuse.
For I have seen winds blow the forest down,
And I have seen some sturdy trees survive ;
Death have I seen, and war, and I have known
The miracles that keep the soul alive.
And I have known, as well, the Things that kill
With a long death those unsubstantial men
Who would with money or with systems fill
The human void, that shall be void until
The spirit is acknowledged once again
As lord of Things. We shall be richer then.

To those of us, and there are many, who know Florence Hamilton—poet, long a lecturer on poetry, a vivid creative personality—we expected a fine book from her, but she has brought us all to a new understanding of her gifts in this first volume of her poetry, *A Moment's Monument* (Klein-Heimbinder Co., Inc., New York).

Here are splendid sonnets. The first is ;

When I am grass, shall any hour regret
Ferns, crescent moons, the mothy fields of home,
The scent of mint, the red-winged blackbird, foam
White on the dolphin rocks, the rainbow's net;
The city lights at dusk, the sudden jet
Of dusty sidewalks in a summer shower . . .
The feel of moss, men's voices, each bright hour;
The words at midnight, two flames in one flame met!

Yes, I must cede them, leave them all behind
As carelessly as if I scorned or loathed them,
When not a leaf that blew but had my mind,
When it was my carnival heart that clothed them:—
Will I lie still, or as the tree, wind-shaken—
Doomed to forget, or doomed to reawaken?

We will sample a quatrain:

Armed men go by and one of them wears a crown,
Horns and banners proclaim now his renown.
I'll come later—I can't come for a minute—
I'm watching a coloured flower with a honey-bee in it.

"Tenet" is a good one also:

In a world devised for careful plants
Love is the royal extravagance:
In an earth designed for claw and wing,
Pity the most tremendous thing.

In this slender volume there are two sonnets honouring our great poet, Edwin Markham. One day some time ago Mrs. Hamilton asked the Bard for an honest opinion concerning these two sonnets. He states: "Of course, I am not worthy of these lofty praises, but it gives me a happy heart to know I have done something to stir your pen to this lofty utterance. For it is a lofty utterance—the loftiest expression of homage ever sent me; and yet I have received a hundred lyric encomiums from the poets of America. . . . They are well-nigh perfect in construction, in their modulation, in their musical beauty."

We give the first sonnet: "Son of Morning":

The Muses called you to the world's unworth.
They tuned their dream-creating strings and sang
Till all the heavens grew luminous and rang
As ever they ring at some prodigious birth,
While winds and waters join the mighty birth;
Then, that your lips might know the acrid wine,
They made you comrade of the crook-horned kine,
They made you one with all the grief of earth.

Above the Suisun Hills you learned to sing,
Upon the cliffs where clamouring eagles cling;

There bright Apollo, saviour and singer and seer,
Lord of all whirling light, Lord of the Lyre,
Built you for battle and the dread career,
Laid on you vision, and the lips of fire.

Carol M. Ritchie is of Scottish descent and it appears she shares with Bobby Burns indifference to the pretentious and names her book *Rhymer by Chance* (Bruce, Humphries, Boston, Mass.), remembering Burns " but just a rhymer, like by chance." It is not to be wondered at that the gallant and unforgotten Amelia Earhart, with her strangely arresting finish, attracts the poets. We have recently had reason to give such a poem, and here is another, from another source :

Somewhere above a misty world
That backward fled as you soared on
Into the rushing stars, you touched
Immortal things ; and thereupon

All of the splendor that you saw
Compelled you, till you smiled at Death,
Leaving your raiment in his hands
At last, but with your final breath

Sweeping along a new sky trail,
Undaunted, eager, as of old,
Finding your heaven in the air
And all its glories yet untold.

You are not sleeping in the sea,
Not you, who fringed such wondrous things,
Waves you may have pressed your body down,
But *you*, you ride with splendid wings !

Miss Ritchie says of poetry " I believe poetry to be the finest and simplest expression of human emotions and experiences. And I believe that poetry which expresses those emotions and experiences simply and with brevity will be read to-day and in the future as it has been in the past, regardless of schools, trends of thought, or experimental efforts toward the ' new.' I think that poetry should have something to say, and have form, and music. But in testing a new book of verse, if it awakens in me a confirmation of and response to some age-old emotion, to me it is poetry ; if it does not have this effect, it is merely an intellectual experiment. The first will please me, whatever its form ; the other I will probably forget."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

Without any exception, you have the finest poetry magazine I have ever read. I enjoy it very much, indeed : MARTHA H. TRIMBLE, Shreaveport, Louisiana, U.S.A.

FACILITY & ACCOMPLISHMENT

MISS IRIS M. RAIKES presents a book of verse on horses and hounds (*Galloping On*, Alexander Moring, Ltd., 2s. 6d.) in which form and content is mainly derivative, and far too liberally strewn with cliches ; one looks in vain for the arresting line or a novel viewpoint. It is all too familiar, too commonplace. To take but one example : in the name poem the day " passes swiftly " and " fades swiftly " ; hoof-beats call " swift and strong " in another. Elsewhere there are " swiftly-passing cars," rider and horse " swiftly fly," a mare's stride is " swift and smooth," shadows " swiftly pass," foxes are " swift and strong," while both horses and hounds at one time or another are described as " sweeping by " !

The author's love of horses and hounds shines through these verses, but, alas, her gifts do not do it justice. The book is illustrated by some pleasant pencil sketches by Miss May Burton, and there is a preface by Mr. William Fawcett.

There is a soothing quality about the poems of Mrs. Basil Harwood (The Epworth Press, 2s.). The majority belong to a world that is gone and all but forgotten, though one or two such as " 1917 " and " New Year's Eve, 1916," while dating back in time, are as applicable to-day as on the day they were written :

> " The day will dawn when
> nations upon earth
> No longer torn and tearing,
> learn to be
> As brother, linked in happy
> unity."

is a sentiment we still share, even if our hopes are less high in face of the world's second reversion to barbarity.

Outstanding is the little poem " My Son's Soul," which we quote in full :

> Nor wax nor plastic clay
> Had I with which to play.
> Rather jagged rock to impress,
> A thorn-bush to caress !
> Yet gold in the rock was there,
> And the thorn had a rose to bear.
> What matter torn hands or heart ?
> Just a part
> Of the travail each Mother shares—
> If she cares !
> O glint of gold, O scent of rose,
> I die content, God knows, God knows.

With Miss Temple Lane, whose selection of verse (*Fisherman's Wake*, Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 2s. 6d.) is in a very handsome format (including a striking dust jacket), we meet with an altogether

different level of accomplishment. There are no dull or poor poems here, and a number of them rank very high both in conception and workmanship.

The opening stanzas of the title poem (reminiscent of the title of a very different type of literary creation by a fellow-countryman) are rugged and real, and one is frequently arrested by such lines as:

"For Death can take you, as the wind the smoke."

These poems possess in a marked degree that strain of mysticism which we have come to associate with the Irish. The author's brief "At the Fair" contains the germ of a whole philosophy, while Fog" positively exudes the dank-damp of its subject.

The omission of a comma after line 3 of the poem entitled "Rebuff" is unfortunate in an otherwise excellently produced volume. Miss Lane's capacity to convey atmosphere is aptly illustrated by the following stanza from one of her tragic narrative poems:

"Perhaps I prayed, while like a goat I crawled
Down to the fingering sea to bring her back.
The tide possessed the sand; the foam was scrawled
Like slavered spittle where the weed lay black—
I searched for her in every pile of wrack."

Mr. C. F. Macintyre (*Cafés and Cathedrals*, Oxford University Press, 5s.) is all sophistication and worldliness (what could be more outspoken and contemptuous than his "Night Markets, II Retail: 69 Rue des Quatre Vents"?). He does not always hit the bull, but at least there is no sentimental mush about his work, for which we must be grateful. At their best his verses offer us a vivid delineation of things starkly seen, often aptly commented upon; at their worst, they betray too conscious a striving after the mind-bludgeoning metaphor and alliterative and onomatopoeic effect.

After the initial shock of seeing gondolas described as "Sleek cockroaches from the green slimy drains," one is progressively attracted to such a poem as "Gondoliers," mainly by virtue of a felicitous choice of words and rhythm. An interesting volume, but —may one venture to suggest that the price of the book, excellently produced as it is, is a little on the high side?

Mr. Donald Hughes's largeness of heart does him credit and comes as a salutary spark in a world darkened by ill-will, greed and aggression; but no amount of goodwill can make up for a lack of originality in his *Song of Love* (published by a Bristol firm of printers, 1s.). The last line of all is inclined to make the reader feel that the whole thing has been nothing more than a Byng Crosbie Song Lyric after all, which is a pity, as the poem has some pleasing lines. We expect better work from Mr. Hughes.

Of *Grist* by T. H. Sanderson-Wells (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 5s.), we must regretfully record that quantity takes precedence over

quality. Reading these facile verses one cannot help but feel that one has encountered just such lines a hundred times before. The endless lilt of familiar scansions tends to drug the reader into a dangerous state of mental impotence in which he is, perhaps, no longer able to do justice to such vision as the poet possesses. The answer to which is, possibly, that even a Milton sometimes palls, certainly a Tennyson or a Longfellow.

In an elegant limited edition from Japan (*Poems Among Shapes and Shadows*, by S. Oshima, The Hokuseido Press, Tokyo, 2 Yen) are the poems of a philosopher " recollected in tranquillity "; and if they sometimes seem to fall between the two stools of oriental simplicity and a more self-conscious western sophistication, they are still able to convey a sense of quiet beauty and dignity. An occasional excess of alliteration, a too liberal use of adjectives, these mar some of the verses, but constitute no more than slight blemishes, amply offset by the poet's gift of phantasy.

The book is produced with all the craftsmanship one has come to associate with a Nipponese product, and contains a fitting prefatory poem by Edmund Blunden, and a photograph of the author which is not quite in keeping with the rest.

E. Curt Peters.

* * * * *

Knowing the past gloom and constant seriousness of Mr. T. S. Eliot, it is a little difficult to contemplate him as a humorous writer, yet *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, (Faber and Faber, 3s. 6d.) is humorous verse of the first order. It owes a deliberate debt to the fun of Lear and Belloc and the manner of Kipling, all re-modelled and re-animated into a cleverness of its own. " The Jumblies " are still framed in our affection while the landscapes of Lear are too often turned to the wall; perhaps " Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer " will outline Mr. Prufrock.

The posthumous volume of Sir Henry Newbolt, *A Perpetual Memory and Other Poems* (John Murray, 3s. 6d.) is doubly prefaced by Mr. Walter de la Mare and by his son-in-law, Mr. John Furze, and these two, aided by Sir William Rothenstien's portrait, provide a sympathetic setting for the delicate precision of the sensitive poems. The title poem has an unforseen significance and poignancy at the present time.

> Broken and pierced, hung on the bitter wire,
> By their most precious death the Sons of Man
> Redeem for us the life of our desire—
> O Christ how often since the world began!

Bridges describes the sad song of the nightingale as " a throe of the heart ", and one is reminded of this when reading Dorothy Margaret Paulin's poems. Their deep underlying sorrow has been changed into something beautiful and appealing, and these qualities are reflected in the very sound of the book's title: *The Wan Water* (Shakespeare Head

Press, 6s.). Whether using formed or free verse Miss Paulin has a grace of utterance flowing like water and obedient like it to the forces acting upon it. The following sonnet is particularly satisfying:

All lasting loveliness is immanent.
As sculptor probes to bone, winter to line,
So delves the soul to beauty. No design
Of flesh or leaf, colour or argument,
May smother inward lack: no incident
Of candle, vestment, flower, redeem that shrine
Whose spirit is false; nor artifice confine
Intrinsic rottenness. The element
Of beauty is soul-stark sincerity . . .
Give me bone-beauty of sense, of thought, of mind!
The fundamental passions of mankind
Let me endure! Give strength, simplicity;
Give height and depth! As lofty trees must start
Deep from the earth, so poetry from the heart.

Edgar Newgass in *Moods and Tenses* (Favil Press, 3s. 6d.) also has his thesis on the making of poetry, though he is more concerned here with the outward form than the inward grace:

The poet's medium is words
Wherewith such happenings are drawn
As branches stark against the dawn,
The sudden songs of birds.

And clouds that drive across the sky;
The beat of wing high overhead,
Or silver silences outspread
When the moon rides high.

And so he brings his offering
Of words, good servitors of thought,
Words he has weighed, arrayed and wrought
Until at last they sing.

Other poems of his are pleasantly intimate with the ways of dogs and children.

Besides Robert Lynd's comprehensive and representative *Anthology of Modern Poetry* should now be placed the new edition of the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, first published in 1900. Sir Arthur Quiller Couch has added a hundred-odd pages, admitting poems by modern writers down to 1918 with great discrimination. Sir Arthur confesses, "I felt my judgment insecure amid post-War poetry. Although I cannot dispute against Time, this is not to admit a charge of crabbed ages, since it has been my good fortune to spend the most part of these late years with the young and to share—even in some measure to encourage—their zest for experiment. The Muse's house has many mansions: their hospitality has outlived many policies of State, more than a few religions, countless heresies, and it were profane to misdoubt the Nine as having forsaken these so long favoured inlands. Of experiment I still hold myself fairly competent to judge. But, writing in

1939, I am at a loss what to do with a fashion of morose disparagement, of sneering at things long by catholic consent accounted beautiful, of scorning at 'man's unconquerable mind' and hanging up (without benefit of laundry) our common humanity as a rag on a clothes-line. Be it allowed that these present times are dark. Yet what are our poets of use—what are they for—if they cannot hearten the crew with auspices of delight?" These percipient words were penned at Whitsun: they are the more sagacious now when this magnificent corpus of English poetry, ignoring modern defeatism and vacillation, becomes a true war-time book, with poetry's ancient "note of valiancy—of the old Roman 'virtue' mated with cheerfulness—dominant throughout, if in many curious moods." The reader, Sir Arthur suggests, may trace this note back "far behind Chaucer to the rudest beginnings of English song. It is indigenous, proper to our native spirit, and it will endure,"—a brave declaration based on an honourable and inspiring foundation, which the degeneracy of post-war years will not undermine.

A companion volume for pocket use is opportunely provided by the inclusion of Gerald Bullet's brilliant *Galaxy of Shorter Poems* in Everyman's Library (Dent, 2s.), most welcome at a time when the values implicit in poetry are more than ever to be cherished. Whatever else may fail us, these cannot fail, the Editor boldly declares, supported by admirable examples, of permanent charm and worth, from which the tawdry and ephemeral have been excluded.

Mr. Bullett's good taste is again demonstrated in *The Jackdaw's Nest* a fivefold anthology of verse and prose (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.). In above a thousand pages Mr. Bullett presents a collection of long narrative poems ranging from Chaucer to James Laver and a catholic selection of nocturnes and pastorals and a fascinating and occasionally startling assembly of brevities, the spoil of a literary jackdaw, in addition to a wide range of essays and other literary prose.

The ground plan of *The Knapsack* (Routledge, 6s.) is similar. In his preface to this pocket book of prose and verse, Herbert Read, D.S.O., M.C., points out, "During the last war, as a soldier on active service, I was very conscious of the need of a book which I could carry about with me as part of my kit, and which would suit the various moods and circumstances of my unsettled existence. It is impracticable to carry about with one an adequate library—indeed, one book at a time is the most the average soldier can conveniently accommodate,"—and that lacks the necessary variety. Hence this anthology, which is no miscellaneous ragbag of shreds and patches but generous portions of noble and entertaining prose and poetry, classical, mediaeval, modern. The only unworthy item is in the light verse section—a so-called popular ballad that is neither witty, nor humorous, nor good melodrama.

The most charming verse books for young children—and even for those of mature years whose taste remains simple and undebased—are the little volumes of poems and pictures (in colour) by Cicely Mary

Barker published by Blackie and Son at 1s. 6d., *A Flower Fairy Alphabet*, *Flower Fairies of the Spring*, *Summer*, *etc.*, as well as the equally charming *Books of Rhymes and Hymns*, many items in which might have been stuffed into a section of Herbert Read's *Knapsack* in place of some of the pieces included therein following the example of Mr. Auden. It would be better for the highbrow, too, to cleanse his vitiated taste by a course of childlike simplicity and straightforward utterance.

We again welcome the handsome quarto British Annual of Literature (Vol. 2, 5s.), but venture to suggest that now the *Christmas Bookman* no longer appears this *Annual* could now take its place as an extended survey of the year's work in literature more authoritative and comprehensive than the perfunctory lists appearing against advertisements in some weekly papers. Poetry is competently dealt with in this new issue, notably in a well-informed review of "The Indian Parnassus" by Professor V. N. Bhushan and other Dominion surveys and a well-deserved appreciation of Ernest Rhys. In the literary competitions a guinea is offered for a short poem and a bronze medal for an unpublished volume of verse. This year's prize poem—" The Knight of Peace "—is by Mrs. Iërne Ormsby, another Poetry Reviewer (Pauline Huthwaite) being placed second.

A pleasant simplicity pervades *Shepherds of Bethlehem* (Sands, 6s.) in which Mary Winter Were puts forward a woman of the people of Palestine, the daughter of a Bethlehem shepherd, to recount the Gospel story. Tradition and legend are skilfully introduced to amplify a familiar narrative in sustained Biblical diction, with POETRY REVIEW and other lyrics appropriately added.

The Vancouver Poetry Writers Group, which is affiliated with The Poetry Society, under the direction of Mrs. Irene H. Moody Lewis, has published an attractive pamphlet of *Poems*. The contributors, who show great versatility and metrical skill, include Marion Isabel Angus, R. L. Firth, Clara Hooper, I. H. Moody, Mary Cornell, M. Nelson Devitt, R. H. Gilpin, A. Winlow Hucks, Mary Ilstad, A. T. Peacey, L. C. Teeple, H. Kathleen Wheeler and Julie Young.

Kingdom of Earth by Wilfred J. Plumbe (Williams and Norgate, 2s. 6d.) might more properly be called " of Air," for there is hardly a poem in the first section where the wind does not dominate. As they are moorland scenes this is as it should be, and in them Mr. Plumbe has caught most excellently the invigorating air and splendour of such places. His " Meadow and Woodland " pieces are equally well suited to their gentler environment. But the moors make the stronger appeal.

THE POET'S JOB: A PERTINENT ARGUMENT AND SUGGESTION

A Letter to the Editor

A BREATH from the wider world blows through the pages of your excellent journal with Mr. Hodges's letter.

Mr. Hodges, who is neither a poet nor a man in any way connected with the world of poetry, but is a plain, ordinary, honest, rational creature, and obviously a trier, wants to do what we as poets are ever urging on people to do; that is, read poetry. He does, but finds himself defeated by "words, words, words." But worse than this, the attempt even depresses him.

He says: "Personally I incline to the view that the great mass of men and women of poetic minds (but do not write) have lost heart, and almost desire, because it would seem a smoke screen has hidden from their souls the beauty and dignity of poetry."

I will not argue Mr. Hodges's statement either way, but I can state definitely that I, as a poet, who love the fine quality, the hidden jewel, will not wade to find it the oceans of commonplace, obscure verbiage that covers paper to-day. How much the less will those who have no particular predeliction, the thousands of ordinary busy people scattered through our land for whom it is written, "Where there is no vision the people perish"?

What is it that is wrong? Have our poets no vision? If they have and it is not presented in such a way as to be recognizable to ordinary, rational minds, it is not a vision of any worth at all. In fact, it ceases to be vision.

For my part I think there is much high endeavour to aspire. But vision must be broad as well as high.

What is the endeavour of our poets and editors of magazines? The production and printing of pure poetry? A laudable ideal! But pure poetry, it is acknowledged, has ever been an infrequent visitant even to the greatest poets of the past. What did these men do to fill in the gaps?

For thousands of years poets have gone to the common wells of broad human experience and emotion, and to the wells of poetic tradition—until now.

Now to be "safe" and to be able to get into the fashionable magazines a poet dare not impinge in any way on the past. Anything may betray him; a word, a phrase, a technical embellishment, the dignity of beauty of which Mr. Hodges speaks, the rousing line, the broad human emotion.

To avoid this he exploits the personal, he must break the fine rhythm that flows from his heart and soul, he must muddy over his rousing lines, he must water them down, he must make them bald, or if he is extreme he must twist and distort and pervert them, until he ends up by saying poorly and narrowly what he might have said richly with spirit, drama and attack. It keeps him "safe" and in the

modern running, but it is a negative virtue. It pleases a small circle, but the world runs away.

This is one aspect of why the poetry of which Mr. Hodges complains is "shorn of its spirit," and it is one of the reasons why craftsmanship, which should be directed to skill in conveying to others the delight which the poet has felt, becomes concentrated on the mere avoidance of pitfalls and the manufacture of unnatural difference.

There is another aspect of this, which seems to be due to the invasion of our poetry by Celtic mysticism. Perhaps everybody but the Celt has been driven out of poetry by the pressure of modern life! But the emotionalism of cliques tends to put the abstract idea of poetry as an entity, poetry the good, the true, the beautiful in itself—before ever a line has been written—on so high a pedestal that the poet, surrounded by his abstracted coterie, ceases to remember that his function should be that of an artist and a craftsman whose job is to convey to others his delight.

Hence such a letter as appeared in your November issue expressing concern at the state of poetry to-day in this country and postulating what the writers believed necessary in poetry; beauty, clarity, freedom of emotion, a wider audience; a type of lament and aspiration that is becoming tiresome, as the writers neither point to what actual good poems there are produced nor are in any way explicit as to how this delectable state in poetry which is obviously what everybody desires, can be attained.

Poetry as an abstract idea to be lamented and desired is meaningless, but a good poem is a thing of value. To stop this desolating lamentation which is poured out article after article,—and is not even just to those of us who do, although occasionally, attain a good poem,—and to have some concrete evidence of what our vague yearners after the sublime do consider a good poem, I suggest that the writers of the Round Robin, without more ado, and to go no further afield, get hold of one year's back numbers of THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day*, starting from now, and pick out what poems attain their standard. Then let THE POETRY REVIEW print their titles. It will interest the writers of the Round Robin and put them to a test, it will help readers to have a list of poems they are likely to enjoy without first being suffocated by mists of desultory ink, and it will be in the nature of a solid comfort for what we actually have amid a world of distressful theorizing about what we have not. There must be some poems distilled from the sweat of authors' brows that are good enough to be rescued from the lumber-room, restored to us and cherished.

This does not get away from the fact of all the other poems that hang like a cloud over the horizon of a waiting world and block the sun from its view.

What did the older poets do when they were not on the dazzling heights of pure poetry or inspiration when all things are justifiable? They had for one thing a structure to fall back on; a story, perhaps,

of human interest for the not particularly poetically minded. They had love or war, men in action in life real or imagined, a background of earth or heaven or myth, of philosophical speculation concerning man's state, a thousand things to weld together the purple patches. Above all they were artists who studied to delight both in matter and manner, and when they could not at least to interest. They had as background for their verse man's experiences, the great matrix of life. They drew not only on the technical skill of the past, on the eternal wells common to all poetry, poetical tradition, but they drew on the wells of all life, common and profound.

We have apparently abandoned all this. We must avoid our common heritage, life and drama, the struggle of human forces, in favour of being up to date, at this stage of " advancement " in poetry, which seems to be a condition of perpetual misty titillation of aspiration towards spirituality and the stars, filling in the gaps with pretty bits about nature because that is all right, good and beautiful and is still permissible, till we become more remote from men and women and affairs and are surrounded only by a small body of devoted " souls " who are aspiring with us heaven knows where !

The poet is become to be like a man living on a sandbank in the middle of the ocean with nothing in front of him and nothing behind. The utterances he makes may waft up to heaven. They won't waft anywhere else, and even if he preserved them in a bottle they would be of little interest to the future because even what is personal vision and joy he does not study to communicate as the master did.

It is well to aspire. It is well to avoid cliché where we can. It is well to invent a measure of new rhythms as a change from the old. It is well to leave to prose much that is topical and better in prose, and it is well to write as much beautiful poetry as we can, as airy and misty as we like. But it is not well if all our poetry is cultivated to lack life-content : what is vulgarly known as guts. And this is precisely what it does lack ; guts and broad humanity.

Mr. Hassall, to mention one poet, has it, but he, perhaps, is not spiritual and beautiful and mystical enough for the worshippers at the shrine of poetry. Neither was Shakespeare nor John Keats.

How is this to be got ? You can't give vitals to a man who hasn't any. The poem depends on the man. But a start has to be made somewhere, and it can be begun, not by lowering the standard, but by a change in direction to a more catholic taste.

The ordinary man and the lover of a poem is not concerned with the fashionable nor advanced theorizings of a school of poetry, nor whether the method of approach to a poem is in keeping with its ideas. He is concerned whether the poem is effective. He may not care for, say, Greek hexameters or Popeian couplets, but he will at least, before passing on to measures more of his choice, respect a poem well wrought in these metres. If they are well done he at least won't get a headache and throw the book away and curse poetry.

And while I am not suggesting that all our writers should relapse into forms already perfected,—the poet who has mastered all these will have his own variation,—I would suggest that all styles of poetry are permissible, the onus lying on the skill of the writer.

The sculptor learns to handle his tools. He practises on clay from models. After he has mastered the elements of his craft he may copy life. When he can copy life he may begin to create from life.

I suggest that while strict to bring pressure against dull meandering, the bonds of pin-pricking criticism and the fears of plagiarism under which poets live should be loosened, and that young poets be encouraged to write in all styles and all techniques to acquire craftsmanship, and be discouraged from dripping emotion on to paper without the faintest notion of objectivity or where they are going.

This would not prevent the birth of the rare very fine poem, and the results in the mass of poems would not be worse than they are now, but the practice might help to give an objective tinge to the writers' minds and would certainly stimulate interest in craftsmanship.

Personally I don't believe any form whatever is wrong for use to-day. The background of a poet's inspiration is practice, and to me a poem should be judged so solely by its effectiveness in its sphere. After that, and only after that, new rhythms and higher flights and vision can be left to the power from which they spring.

Poetry is eternal not temporal. Form should be choice-free. Bad copies will always be bad copies, and what Mr. Hodges calls " only the decoration of an idea after laborious search for a supposedly fine expression in language, which has no relation to soul emotion," is exactly what he calls it, and something with which we shall always be afflicted no doubt. But these are not intrinsic demerits. They are only evidence of the lack of soul, skill, and taste in a writer.

There is much outcry to-day against such practices of the older poets, such, for instance, as inversion, poets declaiming against the " insincerity " of this practice or that, and, save that I think, as I have stated, it is necessary for all young writers to become deeply versed in the intricacies of old and skilful measures, I am far from wishing to hoist any complications on to the free flow of speech. But I would suggest that, far from being insincerities, these tricks so inveighed against were part of the skill of the old writers by which they succeeded in keeping interest alive, which is more than their successors can do with all their " sincerity."

Poetry should have no age and no condition except its life-content, its vision and its skill. Nothing is antiquated or artificial if it is illumined and glows. It may be jewelled and chiselled and decorated, and twisted and inverted and broken up into little pieces and put back again by a great artist like Milton, or it may come out bare like the Bible, though here the artistry is so consummate many people perhaps don't realize it is there. But given the man there would be nothing

against either method to-day, or the innumerable gradations between them.

In truth the art of poetry is so difficult, the vision so fleeting, the sustaining of interest so hard, that poets should not be debarred on grounds of supposed artificiality from all the metrical and rhythmical facilities and technical device that poetry ancient and modern can command.

To-day we stand between two schools; the extreme modernists, the worst of whom create little but perverted ugliness, and the new-orthodox school who create very little but a mist of "sincerity," not realizing that sincerity to an artist is not only sincerity to his soul but sincerity to his art. And incidentally, when they do leave their spiritual beatitudes and come to more mundane matter, despising skill and technique as trickery, they are so deplorably flat and dull as to be not worth reading. But, as I have pointed out, this is not entirely their fault. Criticism has taught them that technical skill and grace and the weaving of words to get the best out of them is trickery, as if Paderewski could be Paderewski without being something of a juggler too! It is to be greatly deplored that the theatre of to-day does not favour poetry, because there poets could learn to make a robust, objective, unmeandering, moving and reasonably clear masculine utterance.

The poetry that Mr. Hodges complains of as "shorn of its spirit" should not be so described. Of spirit it has often a surprising amount, but it is the bare bones of spirit. What it lacks is depth and breadth, roundness, richness and fulness, and only with the addition of these can a person, who does not live continuously in the high speculative realms peculiar to the poet, apprehend the sense of the presence of the spiritual quality of loveliness or awakening in a poem. Most of the things I have enumerated as being in the equipment of the older poets are necessary to bring the poem to that state where it can be fully enjoyed by the stranger, and if I have advocated these terrible retrograde goings back to study and learn, for which I shall be doubtless misunderstood, it is only towards this broader purpose of making poetry more concentrated, less tedious and more communicable than Mr. Hodges feels it is now.

But if we begin to bring this fulness and communicability back into poetry we begin to enter those broad and general realms of the great poets of the past. We shall seem to impinge. Though we never utter a phrase used by anybody else there will be a sense to some of likeness to the past.

This may be so but it will be so only in the way that life and poetry underneath are not very dissimilar to what they have been for many generations of men. There is a change upon the face of things which pass. We shall not be taken up by any schools or coterie, but we may have in time a wider audience, and that is what the argument is about.

LYND NATHAN.

THE REVELATION OF POETRY AND ART TO LIFE

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

SIR,—I should like to express my grateful appreciation of Dallas Kenmare's most interesting and suggestive articles " The True Sun " and " Anthologies at War," which appeared in the last (November) number of THE POETRY REVIEW ; and, if I may be permitted to do so, to comment thereon, with a view to eliciting a more explicit exposition of certain of the author's implications, perhaps other than what the frank expression of my own views may seem to imply.

On p. 434 Miss Kenmare writes : " and with a great poet the nature of the times will not determine the quality of his writing, though it may influence the content ; and it is on quality that poetry depends." And further, on p. 497 : " what the perceptive reader and critic inevitably knows ; that the manner, not the matter, is the final test of poetry."

I would unhesitatingly maintain that the quality or manner of a great poet's writing inevitably becomes more vital, impassioned and transcendental in proportion to the enhanced intensity and exalted character of the life forces and emotions operating around and upon him, the nature of which constitutes the living embodiment of his times and frequently becomes the initial cause—if not the source of his inspiration. The greater and more exalted these be, the greater will be the skill and technique required to do justice thereto, and hence the greater the resultant quality of his writing ; for example Swinburne's " Hertha " and " Hymn of Man " and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Similarly, in the case of music, it was assuredly due to his life experience and the greatness of his subject-matter and its purpose that inspired and enabled Wagner to develop the marvellous musical technique of his works as the only medium capable of ***worthily*** expressing their greatness.

It will be admitted that, fundamentally, poetry is a medium for the expression and the relation, through words, of human thoughts and emotions, desires and actions, experienced or imagined ; and that the character, arrangement and relation to one another of such words must conform more or less to certain recognized laws, structure, and technique of rhythm, metre, rhyme, which distinguish poetry from prose and constitute its essential characteristic, which, for convenience, I refer to as " form."

Subject-matter and purpose are indissolubly linked to poetic imagination, and form and technique are their servants—interpreters translating the within into the without, through which the voices of the former are made articulate to the world, by means of instruments capable of responding without limit, in melody, measure and degree to their masters' commands.

I maintain that there are five all-important and inter-related factors upon and by which the true net value and greatness of any poetry

should be judged:—1. Subject-matter; 2. Form (as previously defined); 3. Adherence to truth; 4. Inspiration and Purpose; 5. Intelligibility.

I am therefore entirely at one with the definitive quotation of Stopford Brooke, so appositely given by Miss Kenmare and of which many of our present-day poets cannot be too often reminded:—"The needs of poetry—great matter; lovely manner; thought and feeling; observation of the outward—contemplation of the inward world; passion knit fast to truth."

I have included factor 5 for the reason that certain modern writers of poetry have seemingly seen fit to mishandle factors 1 and 2 so freely, that the factor of intelligibility has thereby become either grossly obscured, or else has simply ceased to exist for other than such writers.

I have presumed to place subject-matter first because I am unable to regard any poem as being truly great, no matter how skilful its technique and legitimate its construction, if its subject-matter be merely trivial or its meaning unintelligible—and to such extent, devoid of purpose; since I hold that the more exalted its subject-matter and the nobler its purpose, the greater is the poem. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth eternal life."

This is not to say that I underrate the importance of "form" as previously defined. On the contrary, I recognize that, without it, so-called poetry simply ceases to be poetry, as distinct from prose;—and for this reason I would unhesitatingly challenge the right of certain modern verse to be classed as poetry.

This brings me to the all-important problem of the relation of present-day art to life, concerning which I have the gravest misgivings. What of the "eternal truths, the unchanging laws governing life and art" to which Miss Kenmare alludes? (op. cit., p. 498). In every branch of art we find that these have been deliberately and persistently violated or misused; the vulgar and the garish are taking the place of the refined and the artistic; the ugly, the false and the obscene are produced in preference to the beautiful, the true and the pure; there are no depths to which certain of the world's sensation-mongers and profiteers—exploiters of the public's weaknesses and peccability—will not descend when they can profitably do so with impunity.

There are to be seen, placarded outside at least one place of "artistic entertainment" in the West End of London, flaunting their revolting obscenity before the public gaze, photographs so demoralizing and suggestive that no decent-minded man or woman can look at them without a feeling of shame and revulsion that such things should be.

In sculpture also we find monstrosities and obscenities, the grossest travesties of nature, deliberately created in flagrant mockery of truth and beauty. In all directions the laws of harmony, truth and beauty are persistently violated, mainly for the purpose of producing unholy

and startling effects and for the provoking of undesirable emotions. In the realm of music, formerly popular and beautiful melodies have been replaced by the appalling and hideous innovations of jazz, crooning, and the like—the so-called "music" of the aboriginies. Even more indescribably hideous and disgusting productions are to be found emanating from sundry degenerate minds and half-wits accredited to sects of the Surrealist and kindred type of excrescence, where everything is deliberately misapplied, distorted, or employed expressly for purposes as far removed as possible from what is legitimate and proper; for instance, that of a woman who wore, at a midsummer's gathering, a raw and stinking pork chop as a head-dress. Such perversities, I consider, are mainly due to the prevalent and increasing lust of freedom for the individual—freedom to flout with impunity all conventions and generally recognized international and communal observances and restrictions.

The extent to which this "licence-lust," as I term it, has invaded present-day literature is common knowledge; and that the realm of Poetry has not escaped its baneful and corrosive influence is all too apparent: for example, in a recent and otherwise reputable anthology, mainly of modern verse, I found amongst several objectionable poems, one so gratuitously disgusting that I would not read it aloud even to sustain my contentions.

In numerous other instances the laws of poetry technique—those responsible for the charm and beauty of form—have been either carelessly transgressed, or else purposely misapplied in order to produce startling and novel effects—frequently that of complete unintelligibility; results which, in any lover of poetry bold and patient enough to sample such abortions and travesties of the art, must inevitably provoke irritation and disgust.

More sinister, however, than this progressively demoralizing license-lust, of which present-day literature is one of the victims, there is now rampant a far deadlier disease, a veritable vice of the first magnitude, one in respect of which the Press is probably the world's most inveterate addict—with broadcasting a close second; a vice, moreover, which has invaded and affected to a greater or lesser extent almost every department of mankind's activities.

It is the universal disregard and even contempt for Truth; the flagrant utilization of falsehood, and the shocking indifference towards hypocrisy and deceit, the complacent acceptance of which as the recognized means to ends both good and bad, is progressively destroying the repute and dignity of the world's nations and sapping the morale of their peoples: in a word, it is the factual mockery and rejection of the precept: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—as the knowledge thereof assuredly would—free from the damnable quicksand of slaughter, hatred and suffering which is now threatening to engulf mankind.

If, as the result of investigation and examination indicate, the

present parlous condition of the world is mainly due to the previous Great War, Humanity has now imprisoned itself in a fatally vicious circle—one from which no merely material agency can effect its release. It remains for the wielders—not of the sword, but of the pen and the tongue—to provide the only weapons capable of accomplishing this, and by means of the shattering incendiary bombs of Truth, explode for all time the preposterous and fatal fallacy that enduring world-peace can be be established through world-wars.

Herein lie the supreme opportunity and the paramount duty of the World's poets. That they may the more readily and effectively discharge their responsible task, amidst the welter of error and self-deception, of falsehood and of hatred now running riot through the world about them, I would earnestly beseech them to take and cherish within their hearts as a sacred and all-protecting talisman—a sure antidote for the poison gases surrounding them—the following precept :—" Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report : if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Reverting to Miss Kenmare's article (p. 434, op. cit.), I am unable to concur in the implications contained in the following passage :— " But unfortunately his poetry then becomes didactic. Very few poets, it is true, even the greatest, have avoided this danger."

Surely a poem cannot be the worse because it is " instructive " or " teaching some moral lesson," as the term indicates ! Heaven knows, the world was never in such desperate need of being taught moral lessons as it is to-day. Macaulay used the expression : " The finest didactic poem in any language."

It is not quite clear to me what precisely is meant by the following passages (p. 440) :—" The writers who allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the evil forces, the death-influences, are themselves contributing to those evils. That is why the infection of literature by politics is, to a final understanding, undesirable."

Also, on p. 498, appears the following important statement :— " Not until we recognize once more the eternal truths, the unchanging laws governing life and art, and return to a realization of the need for great poetry, can there be any hope for our derelict civilization. So long as poets are content to represent, never to transcend, their age, the age remains spiritually barren. The responsibility of the poets is heavy, since, as Shelley knew well, they are ' the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' "

If the author refers, in the first paragraph, to such writers only as have accepted the present evils as inevitable—some of whom seem to have abandoned themselves to wallowing in the welter of lies and hatred now progressively engulfing the world—then I heartily agree with her.

The " infection of literature with politics " is a different matter.

I most emphatically agree that the responsibility resting upon the poets to-day is indeed a heavy one; and I am convinced that when, as now, moral and consequently material issues are at stake, of such unprecedented magnitude and supreme moment that the world's civilization is verily in jeopardy, only the Poet can attain the necessary vision, and the language of poetry alone trumpet forth Truth's flaming challenge in words whose inspiration and fire can scorch and convince the evildoers of their colossal sin and folly.

But how are we to recognize and conform to "the eternal truths, the unchanging laws governing life and art" unless we realize, denounce and oppose with all our minds and with all our strength their flagrantly persistent violation and the appalling evils resulting therefrom?

I fully appreciate that only in proportion as the world becomes freed from evil will the frank declamation of Truth cease to give offence and to provoke hostility.

Nevertheless there has never been in its history a time when this duty was so insistent as it is to-day; and for the Seer and Poet, possessed of a profound realization of "the eternal values, the true significance of human life," to evade or ignore such obligation, through fear of consequences, or otherwise, is fully as grievous a sin as it was when certain of the prophets of old, to their own undoing, abstained from delivering the divine messages which they knew had been imparted to them from spiritual sources.

Surely Miss Kenmare would not deny to Isaiah his right justly to be regarded as one of the greatest prophet-poets of all time,—if not, indeed, the greatest,—and, assuredly a didactic one!

Notwithstanding that in the world to-day righteousness and propaganda are as far apart as the Poles, I maintain that truly righteous propaganda—the surest means wherewith to defeat and demolish "the evil forces, the death-influences" now threatening to destroy "our derelict civilization," could and should find its loftiest, most inspiring and effective expression through the medium of those of the world's poets possessed of a final understanding of the divine precept: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

How else are we to accomplish this—than which no more sacred and imperative duty behoves mankind, if the poets—"the unacknowledged legislators of the World,"—are to be debarred from utilizing as subject-matter the present super-dominant world factors of international relations and world politics? Assuredly, they must not rest satisfied with exposing and denouncing the world's evils,—with predicting the retribution and pronouncing the punishments which its persistence therein will entail.

It is equally—if not more imperative—that they should undertake, with befitting earnestness and enthusiasm, the surely more congenial task of pointing out in clear, unmistakable and convincing language, wherein lies the way to mankind's salvation, and the true and only

means whereby the upward road thereto may be regained; the ascent of which can alone enable man progressively to transcend—instead of merely to represent the successive ages of his earthly sojourn.

The following stanzas, selected from a recent and singularly apposite poem, will serve, in a measure, to illustrate my contention; and I would much like to know whether, in Miss Kenmare's opinion, its purpose and subject-matter are detrimental features, and such as would bring the author thereof within the category of "the writers who allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the evil forces, the death-influences," of which she writes:

Thus did God speak to me within the night;
Vengeance is mine; I will repay each wrong;
denounce thou Evil; vindicate the Right;
warn thou the nations that my arm is long.
* * *
Now, Darkness reigns, while from Truth's lamp divine
her guiding beams light not Life's raging sea,
choked by Suppression's lies that line on line
parade exalted in their infamy.

New Seasons swell its fury midst new storm
of foul invective, slanders fabricate.
Suppressio veri thunders, true to form,
its calendar of Falsehood and of Hate.

Self-righteous ones who, scorning to obey
their God's commandment here,—"Thou shalt not kill,"
determined are to slay and slay and slay,
till they on others have imposed their will;

Dire punishments their kingdoms shall betide
who mock God thus; who, hiring Death for tool,
seek nation against nation to divide
that Greed may conquer and Injustice rule.

Thus drift we derelict on Hate-swept waves
thundering in darkness on a Future's shore
black with the menace of its countless graves
hungering for wreckage from the rocks of War.

Deploring the fact that God had deputed him to denounce the world's evil doings and to proclaim His punishment for its sinning, the poet continues:

Would He had granted unto me, instead,
to cast upon Life's sea the quick'ning leaven,
the yeast that through Love's consecrated bread
works in men's hearts to draw them nearer Heaven.

This task, alas, not mine,—that might have been
God's wisdom gave to one who better knew
the prayer prayed by the tortured Nazarene,—
"Father, forgive; they know not what they do."

Most cordially do I agree with the delightful concluding passage in "The True Sun" that "if everyone were to turn deliberately from politics and international problems and devote themselves instead to the eternal values, the true significance of life, a miracle would happen, the great miracle of peace on earth." But, alas, all too vast is now the gulf betwixt "everybody" and the relatively infinitesimally small minority who are thus in tune with the Infinite whence are to be derived the wisdom and the strength to think aright, and by right thinking and its inevitable resultant, right conduct, to ensure that Humanity shall evolve along the paths of progress and happiness in accordance with the divine purpose of the infinite and eternally evolving Mind of God.

DOUGLAS S. S. STEUART.

St. Mark's Square, N.W.

"THE TRUE SUN"

[*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW)

SIR,—Surely Mr. Dallas Kenmare in his interesting contribution "The True Sun" to the November–December No. of THE POETRY REVIEW makes an unfortunate inclusion in instancing Percy Bysshe Shelley among poets who are best remembered by work that does not concern matters of ideology.

Will not "The Revolt of Islam" stand pre-eminent and live forever in the minds of persons who are well versed in literary cultivation as the most tremendous epic of the imagination, which was borne upon the wings of the Dawn that broke over the French Revolution? —*and with which the poet must be largely identified!*

Yours etc., ARTHUR ROW.

Clifford, Hereford.

ON CON HARVEY'S REPLY TO MRS. ROSCOE

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW)

SIR,—I read with interest, and some annoyance, Con Harvey's reply to Mrs. Roscoe, in which he states that "most modern poetry, except when written specifically for that purpose, is not intended to be read aloud." I must agree with what Mrs. Roscoe infers, namely that *all* poetry should be able to stand the test of an oral reading.

I believe it was the late Mr. W. B. Yeats who suggested that a poet, on the completion of a poem, should go apart and read it aloud to himself and then to a small circle of critics before sending it out into the wider world; he said that if the sound of soliloquizing was at

first unusual one could soon grow accustomed to it. This is an extreme view but the fact that poetry is in part an oral art is surely known to all its lovers. Though music is, of course, almost entirely oral, would Mr. Harvey suggest that a musician should be content to read his manuscript and never convert it into sound? Words have their music too.

I have no quarrel with modern poetry. There can be good and fair poetry but there can never be bad, in that case it ceases to be poetry and becomes at best merely verse; and, in my opinion, a poem which, in Mr. Harvey's words, "appeals to the intellect" only and not to the senses or the emotions, is but half a poem and therefore not one at all.

Let me suggest that Mr. Harvey perseveres in reading poetry aloud, that he begins with the delightful English of Chaucer and carries forward through the splendid literary history to Auden and Spender. There is no break in the long line of poetry; the moderns may be different as the Elizabethans were different from the Victorians, but they cannot cut themselves off entirely from all those who led up to them. If they do, then, quite simply, they are no longer poets.

Westcott, Nov., 1939. CARLA LANYON LANYON.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

SIR,—In his eager desire to jump on poor Mrs. Roscoe, Mr. Con Harvey appeared to have landed himself in a muddle! He expressly states that "the only true test of poetry in general" is that "it will stand the test of posterity," that is to say its survival value. So on his own showing "Humpty-Dumpty" must be good verse because it has survived so long! Then why sneer at the "Humpty-Dumpty" school?

The first principle of all writing should surely be that language was "invented" by primitive men for one purpose only: to convey ideas and emotions from one mind to another. To cultivate obscurity in writing is to defeat the one purpose for which language was created, and that is not a sign of intelligence whatever else it may be. How can a man who cannot express himself clearly appeal to the intelligence or anything else?

Burton-on-Trent. WALTER BURTON.
(A. Walter Lyle.)

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SIR,—The controversy between Mrs. Roscoe and Con Harvey gives food for thought. Possibly, as duelling has gone out of fashion, a public debate between the parties may be the only solution. Or again, a friendly discussion over a cup of tea might have good results. If asked to mediate I should on the whole lean towards the second alternative.

Mrs. Roscoe erred, perhaps, on the side of brevity, and Con Harvey

is not slow to point to her critic's preference for the general statement. Miss Harvey, however, is annoyed, and petulance is not a good defensive weapon.

As to the question of what is or is not genuine or pure poetry may one recall what Sir Walter Raleigh said when he came to lecture on Christina Rossetti: "The worst of it is you cannot lecture on really pure poetry any more than you can talk about the ingredients of really pure water—it is adulterated, methylated, sanded poetry that makes the best lectures. The only thing that Christina makes me want to do is cry, not lecture."

I do not want to cry, but I do wish I might introduce Con Harvey to Mrs. Roscoe, and them both to Elizabeth Drew's admirable volume, *Discovering Poetry* (O.U.P., 1933)! Yours truly,

R. T. Fleming.

High Wycombe, Bucks, Nov. 6th, 1939.

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review)

Sir,—As Mrs. Theodora Roscoe has expressed the wish to hear what others think of the latest developments in poetry, you may possibly welcome this contribution to the interesting debate she has initiated.

At the time when poetic circles were first startled by the early products of Free or New Verse, I was fortunate enough to hear a distinguished exponent of the cult read a long, a very long poem. My understanding soon ceased to function, but the pleasant sensation of a continuous flow of beautiful sound was strong enough to tempt me to read poems by other members of the movement. In these, however, a silent perusal revealed no "atmosphere" nor did the writers vouchsafe a clue to the meaning so artfully concealed in their verses. I felt myself in presence of that ancient controversy concerning the mysterious gift of speaking with unknown tongues. Inspired common sense having decided that the public use of unknown tongues was to be limited to occasions when an interpreter was present, the urge to display the faculty seems to have disappeared. Until recently the result of that ruling ensured that expression of thought should march with understanding, to the great advantage of people who apprehend by means of the intellect rather than by means of the senses, or by a nice balance of both. History repeats itself and probably will again, certainly will again if sincerity and simplicity are to be despised factors in modern poetry.

It is easy to ridicule these qualities by quoting, for example, "Humpty Dumpty," a gargoyle in verse. But Shakespeare's account of a similar catastrophe, the death of Prince Arthur, is not to be laughed out of court; nor is Molière's testimony to the value of sincerity and simplicity (in "Le Misantrophe") and what have the modern poets produced to equal the sublime expression of both qualities in "Vital spark of heavenly flame"? The need for stressing simplicity is per-

haps more pressing than that of stressing sincerity. An age that has avidly accepted Jazz and apparently derived enhanced enjoyment from Chopin's Nocturnes in syncopation might well be expected to innovate in modes of expression. The time may come when, from the study of sufficient examples of New Verse, it will be possible to recognize exactly what kind of atmosphere (irrespective of the word sense) a " piling up of m's " is meant to convey.

Would the atmosphere of lines stating—

" Where mighty mountains merge in mauve,
and mumbling stream meets stream."

be considered identical with or different from that of—

" Where meaty mandrills munching mow,
and lumbering scream for cream " . . . ?

Like Mrs. Roscoe, I should be glad to know.

Yours truly,

Plymouth, Nov. 21st. R. C. Thomas.

Opening of the Byron Vault at Hucknall-Torkard

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review)

Sir,—It was only quite recently that I learned from some London papers which accidentally came my way that Lord Byron's tomb at Hucknall-Torkard had, some time ago, with the consent of the Home Office, been opened in the course of some necessary architectural alterations to that church, which is part of a Carthusian foundation dating to the fifteenth century. This was, indeed, news of profound interest to me, as it must have been to others who, like myself have always been fascinated by the meteoric and romantic career of this great poet, who still, in the opinion of many, remains the most picturesque and baffling figure on the page of literature. Byron was so famous a man in his day that his superlative genius—to which was added the gift of great personal beauty—made him an object of extraordinary interest to the world. That magic still works. There was, however, one fly in the ointment in the form of a so-called club-foot which appears to have unfavourably coloured his whole outlook upon life. His mother, who, presumably knew what was wrong with her own child, always maintained that the deformity was in the right foot. Moore, as well as Thorwaldsen, the sculptor to whom we owe his best likeness, said that it was in the left; while Lady Blessington and others were unable to decide. Trelawney's confused account of what he found on examination of the poet's feet, after death, at Missolonghi, has long ago been discredited. Canon Barber of Hucknall-Torkard, however, has satisfied himself by a recent inspection of Byron's body—which was found to be in a perfect state of preservation—that the disability was in the right foot. Has he, however, satisfied the world? The leaden case which enclosed the poet's coffin was found torn open

—evidence of previous violation—and the feet were uncovered. The right foot had been cut off and lay loose in the coffin ; but, of the nine witnesses present at this interesting examination, it is not recorded that there was amongst them a single surgical expert who could have set the seal of scientific accuracy on Canon Barber's verdict. His failure, therefore, to use to the full an opportunity which will never recur of enlightening the world as to the specific nature of Byron's disability will hardly secure him the gratitude of posterity ; for the essential cause of the great poet's lameness was, during his lifetime—what it still remains—a subject of interest, as well as of controversy, to friend and foe alike.

Melsetter, S. Rhodesia. D. M. MacRae, M.A., M.D.

The Poetry Review as a Mouthpiece

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review)

Sir,—The issue of The Poetry Review which I have read to-day has been a source of very real pleasure and mental " companionship." So many of our essential interests have been driven underground by war changes (when now, more than ever, we are challenged about *eternal* values) that I deeply appreciate the fact that your magazine is carrying on its important work.

In four groups lately I heard expressed, in the " language " of that particular group, the thought that concludes Dallas Kenmare's interesting article in this issue :

> " In a mad world it becomes increasingly important for the artist, for every leader of thought, to maintain his sanity. Perhaps if everyone were to turn deliberately from politics and international problems, and devote themselves instead to the eternal values, the true significances of human life, a miracle would happen, the great miracle of peace on earth "

These four groups were

1. A W.E.A. group discussing November issue of *The Highway*.
2. A Women's Institute gathering.
3. An Oxford Group meeting.
4. A family gathering.

By different roads they had all arrived at the same conclusion. And while many people here are trying to " escape " from war problems by plunging into more work or else farcical entertainment, others tell me they are re-discovering poetry, and feeling a need for it in war that they did not experience so strongly in peace. I am bringing The Poetry Review to their notice. With best wishes for the continued success of your work.

Ferry Hill, Durham. 7.11.39. Yours sincerely,

D. R. W. Carr.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

I have great pleasure in making the awards this time, as I consider each of the authors named has written a poem which is completely individual, and cannot fail to appeal to many readers.

Readers of THE POETRY REVIEW will remember Mr. W. R. Latham's work. He has written a poem which is splendid in its dignity and power, and, at the same time, its meditative quality.

The awards are as follows:—

DULCIE EDEN GREVILLE, Wakefield; PHOEBE RAYNER, Rivington; W. R. LATHAM, Chingford, Essex; ALAN SMITH, Kenninghill.

Of those included in the list of "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of RACHEL E. BOULTON, B. F. PARGITER and CHARLES WOODHOUSE.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Rachel E. Boulton, Winscombe;
"Cloudrider," Budapest;
Dorothy Rosetta Colls, Tring;
N. K. Cruickshank, Sudbury;
O. C. Dougan, London, N.;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
Sophia Harbin, Yeovil;
J. W. G. Heaven, Ealing;
Gwenda Hollander, Birmingham;
B. F. Pargiter, London, W.;
Violet Rawnsley, E. Penmead;
Indreni Savandranayagam, Colombo;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
Muriel Symmons, Salcombe;
Charles Woodhouse, Haslemere.

COMMENDED:

Enid W. Barry, Highgate;
Dorothy R. W. Carr, Ferryhill;
Enid I. Carter, Hassocks;
E. B. W. Chappelow, Bexley;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood;
A. H. Cordwell, Worthing;
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross;
P. Eugenie Emeric, London;
Mary English, Cobham;
Harry Escott, Gartly, Aberdeen;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
A. Edward Farmer, London,
Gertrude M. Foster, Wellingborough;
E. M. Fison, Oxford;
Anthony Fothergill, Boscombe Down;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth;
F. Jennings, Seaford;
Elizabeth Kentish, Westerham;
P. E. Leaver, Witham;
Redcliffe McKie, Brighton;
A.F.M., Killinich, Wexford;
Ierne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles;
Joyce T. Rowe, London, N.W.;
Claude Rimington, London;
Sybil Powis, Aldeburgh;
Roberta Shuttleworth, Guildford;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, London, E.;
Margery Smith, Nottingham;
John Teague, Broadway;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark;
A. Doris L. Wilson, Bedford.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by February 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

THE LAUREATES OF THE YEAR

The greatly appreciated gift of five pounds for POETRY REVIEW purposes by Mr. John Bain has been devoted to the recognition of special merit in verse contributions published during last year and Mr. MacCallum Smith's premium carried forward to this year with another five pounds added by Mr. MacCallum Smith, whose report on the 1939 poems and allocation of Mr. Bain's generous donation are appended. All the poems published during the year have been taken into consideration, without reference or prejudice to the Premium Editor's awards which dealt with only a section of the poems published. The present is an independent and not a supplementary award :

* * * *

Going through the year's poetry is an unenviable task, but I have tried to seek out what appear to me the most memorable productions. It is strange that few are able to write an evocative line—a line or a phrase which nestles in the mind, a line which insistently recurs or is recalled in association with something else. Poets nowadays play with the big canvas, and are apt to prefer the chaotic colours of the semi-long poem to the quiet, simple shades of the lyric. This, I feel, indicates a lack of spontaneity ; not of inspiration, however, because one can be inspired to an idea without the necessary inevitability. And so, many of the long poems fatigued me because they seemed to be dealing in luxurious clichés, whereas the smaller poems impressed me by their simplicity of form and context.

It is always dangerous to say—"This and this are better than . . ." and I know full well that I may be accused of favouritism, but I can truly say that I have met none of the poets to whom I have apportioned the awards. I would add that my first preference was for Mr. Laurence Whistler's "A Sleeping Draught," but it occurred to me that, being the King's Medallist, he would be happy to stand aside in the hope that those who receive the awards will be encouraged to persevere.

During the short period I have been associated with The Poetry Society I have followed with ever-increasing interest and delight the

Premium Editor's remarks and decisions, and I know that he will appreciate the difficulties presented to me, and my efforts to avoid repetition: again, I have followed step by step the work of two particular poets—Mr. Ronald Fuller and Miss Margeurite Edgelow. Mr. Fuller in his "Two Poems" has the evocative touch, and his poems gave me great pleasure. Miss Edgelow, on the other hand, is inclined to over-write, especially adjectively, but I do think that her "Mediterranean Noon" shows considerable advance on previous work, and I feel that, with a little more discipline and regard for form, she will eventually write that type of poem which "sticks in the memory."

Of the others I can only say, "Well done." Many of them are established poets, and any criticism from me would be an impertinence: indeed, one might say that Mr. Fuller is an established poet, but I have made special mention of his work because it appears to me to be good, wholesome, and to portray a fine, sensitive mind.

The following are my awards for the year:—

January—February: Ronald Fuller for "Two Poems," and Iërne Ormsby for "Crowned."

March—April: Brian Price-Heywood for "Imagination."

May—June: I. Sutherland Groom for "Elizabeth I."

July—August: Con Harvey for "Fata Morgana" and Margaret E. Stringer for "Glen of Dreams."

September—October: Roberta Shuttleworth for "A Roundelay."

November—December: Joan Imig for "Surrender," Charles Woodhouse for "Job Steps Out" and Margeurite Edgelow for "Mediterranean Noon."

In co-operation with Chevalier Galloway Kyle I hope to give a special award of ten pounds for the best poem published during 1940, and I trust that this may encourage all those of The Poetry Society who are verse-writers to write something memorable; nothing would give me greater joy if it happened to be the most notable contribution to poetry in these unhappy days. May the poet, however hard he or she may find it, give us *uaill-gluth an Aoibhnis*.*

MacCallum Smith.

* "The exultant note of joy" (title of O'Heffernan's song.)

The Keats-Shelley Memorial Contest

The winners of the Keats-Shelley Poetry Contest are announced by Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, American Editor of The Poetry Review, and donor of the prizes in response to the comments of Miss Signorelli, who is in charge of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome. On a visit to the House last year in Rome, Mrs. Bartlett learned of the wish for more poetry books. All entries for the prizes carried a donation of $2.00 direct to the library in Rome.

The first prize of $50 is awarded to Mr. Willis Ogden Warren, of 45 East 55th Street, New York City, for his poem "To Poetry—In

Honour of Keats and Shelley" ; the second prize of $25 goes to Miss Evelyn Couchman, of Menton, France, for her "Porta San Paolo" ; the third prize of $15 to Mr. Harold Vinal, of 45 East 55th Street, New York City, for his "Genesis" ; and the fourth prize of $10 to Mr. Clarence Alva Powell, of Detroit, Michigan, for his "Prophesy."

Those receiving honorable mention include Mrs. Antoinette Throckmorton, New York ; Mr. St. Julien Grimke, Charleston, S.C. ; Mrs. Josephine Bulkley Taylor, New York ; Miss Mabel H. Andrews, New York ; Mr. J. Arthur Ferner, Collingswood, N.J. ; Miss Miriam Tigh, Salem, Mass. ; Mr. Henry Evelyn Bliss, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.; and Mr. Zo Elliott, Manchester, N.H.

R. E. Badford (Sheringham) describes exquisitely a familiar reason for "Early to Bed" :

Each night I read. Each night in the new-found summer
I lie with my windows thrown wide to the night, and the candle
Burns by my bed as I lie there reading. The curtain
Blows softly and lets in the moonlight ; the quiet
Sinks on my heart as I read and am moved with mystery.

They have opened a world unexplored by my feet, these pages,
A world which is secret and complex and yet very near ;
Something reigns vast, omnipresent, something within me
Lost in the mountains, expressed in the forests and rivers,
Far from the towns and the cities, save in the mightiest, as Rome.
Boundless, eternal, past history, past our expressing or easing.

With fierce joy and strength I go shouting
Far down the roads of the world, back to the ages of gold,
Till the candle flickers and dies, and the book falls from my hands,
And dawn, the awakener, touches my eyes with sleep.

The Prime Minister, presiding at the Anniversary Dinner of the Royal Literary Fund, said "Some people find their relief in poetry. I always think that you must have a poetical ear as you have a musical ear. While I hope I am not entirely insensible to the charms of poetry, I must admit that I cannot sit down to read a book of poetry unless it is coupled with drama, as we find in our own immortal Shakespeare. It is not true, as I sometimes see it said in the Press, that I go about with a volume of Shakespeare always in my pocket, but I do occasionally indulge in a perusal of some of his works.

"The great interest and delight that I find in Shakespeare is not so much in the words as in the study of the development of his characters, minor as well as major. They seem to be another world, yet always they seem to be part of our modern life."

Mr. Chamberlain a few days later wound up a political speech at the

Albert Hall by saying : " Every confidence one of us can contribute to bring confidence back by keeping up our faith in the spiritual side of our nation. Depend upon it, however strong material forces may seem, they can never dominate the spirit. Not for one moment will I believe that the spiritual force of this nation is less deep-seated to-day than it was in the days of our fathers. Let me conclude by repeating to you some lines of a great American poet : [Whittier] :

Our fathers sleep but men remain
As brave, as wise, as true as they.
Why count the loss and not the gain ?
The best is that we have to-day.

English as well as American readers will be interested in the following letter from Mr. R. P. Leahy, of Bay City, Mich., to our American editor : I have just read POETRY REVIEW for the first time and it is a most fascinating surprise. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate it. It is certainly needed. The great mass of modern poetry and poetry magazines that I have seen remind me of a few grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff. Consequently you can imagine my enthusiasm upon finding a bushel of wheat unencumbered with so few husks. Paraphrasing the great English bard's lines : How far that little volume casts its light. It is the east and POETRY REVIEW is the sun. So shines a good book in a naughty world.

I am especially interested in " The Poetry Value of Modernism " and also " Poetry *v.* Modernism." They came to me like voices in the wilderness, giving new hope. After reading these splendid articles I concluded that real literature and poetic excellence are not yet dead. They are merely buried and smothering under a huge heap of the rich kernel's chaff, while perhaps millions of connoisseurs are hungering for them. I would like very much to see more of MacCallum Smith and Dorothy Paulin. They don't seem to quite fit in with these superficial days, save as prophets. They read more like companions of Burns, Scott, Byron, Campbell and other illustrious Scots of that poetic age.

In " Poetry *v.* Modernism " I am afraid the author's use of the word oratory may be misunderstood. There is so much oratory without eloquence that she undoubtedly intentionally divorced the two ; For there is no poetry without eloquence and there is no eloquence without poetry. They are the masculine and feminine offspring of rare beauty and great emotional content, and so, of course, are humanly *inferior* to the modernistic moth-like celebrities that hover so effectively about their realistic native mire. In fact some of these sylphlike modernists are so ethereally refined that they put Pegasus to shameful flight by soaring in a vacuum. Many of their fluttering kin prefer to live in darkness and there like fireflies win laurels in mutual admiration schools, thereby outstripping the moon and stars by illuminating the world with their brilliant posteriors.

This little *eulogy* to the moth is long past due. It deserves special

mention for it is first aid to modernistic purveyors of literary fabrics, and its daily petition to the omnipotent designer of realistic, modernistic, poetic fashions is, " Great Master, let us prey."

" For 'tis with words as with sunbeams,
The more condensed the deeper they burn."

These lines from your April issue are excellent. They should be blazoned forth in letters for all the world to see. Still, no matter how powerfully concentrated, poetic light would never be able to penetrate the thick shell of a small soul that had not lived it. Concrete heads and hearts are as impregnable as stone, and they are not the prize possessions that possessors believe them to be.

I was very much cheered this morning to hear that you intend to continue THE POETRY REVIEW through the war. This means a great deal to us struggling poets, not only for the sake of the joy of reading THE REVIEW, but for the possibilities of our voices being heard through your pages. This is a great encouragement to continue working at the work we can really do. In so far as I am concerned, I do thank you very sincerely, and admire the courage and steadfastness which enables you to take this stand. Best wishes and continued appreciation of your *great service to the world*, which is recognized among the people able to appreciate it: Ida Sutherland Groom, Clifton.

I am enclosing a double subscription to The Poetry Society, this first year of the war.

I am sure all lovers of poetry must be deeply grateful that the work is to go on—a gap through the war would mean a lost opportunity, for the deepest and sincerest emotions seem to come to the top at such a time. Thanking you for making the continuance of the Society possible in difficult circumstances.

Capetown, 28.10.39. GERTRUDE VALLANCE.

I enclose cheque for the renewal of my subscription for the sum of 17s. 6d. as a proof of my repentance for the trouble I have given you, but above all in appreciation of what THE POETRY REVIEW is doing at this time. In the face of accummulated material difficulties and universal disasters, THE POETRY REVIEW still holds out as a reminder to us all that (in the words of its own Credo) " where there is no vision the people perish." In profound admiration for your work.

Brussels, Dec. 12th. WINIFRED E. GÉRIN.

I enclose £1—a small contribution to The Poetry Society, whose existence, REVIEW and reviewers mean so much to me.—Redcliffe McKie, Brighton.

THE POETRY REVIEW is more than ever a constant source of interest and pleasure during these dark days: Marguerite Evans, Pontypridd.

THE MASTER BUILDERS:

THE FUNCTION OF ART IN WARTIME

IN the issue immediately preceding the outbreak of war (dated September 1st, 1939) *The Times Literary Supplement* published a fine leading article insisting on the necessity for the author, for every artist, to maintain an awareness of his special function when the rest of the world plunges into chaos :

> . . . In the immensity of the uproar of bitterness and unreason, literature has a special duty. . . . Books, all art in its varied forms, are the finer world within a world, the symbol of what wayward and aspiring man has attained. . . . There is a spiritual fortress to guard, a spiritual treasure to preserve, or we are lost in an utter darkness of the mind. It shall be our purpose to keep it as a shrine, exempted from the wrongs of Time. The evanescent gleam of beauty must not perish from the world.

Now once again, as during the last war, " the immensity of the uproar of bitterness and unreason " has confused the minds of many artists ; temporal values are distorted until they assume the stature of eternal values, and in allegiance to those values the true work of the creative artist, his vocation, the unique contribution he and he alone can make, is forgotten. The core of the difficulty is an inability to assess equitably each man's value as an intrinsic and unique part of the universal pattern, and—as an inevitable result—in a humility of the wrong kind. The creative artist too often cannot believe in the divinity of his calling. In England especially, where art is habitually regarded more as a pastime than as a life-work of unsurpassed importance and value, this misunderstanding prevails. In the last hundred years England has developed a sense of commercial values to the exclusion of almost all other conceptions of progress. To-day we are seeing the tragic results of such a materialist philosophy. " The unchanging laws governing life and art " referred to in my article *The True Sun* are broken, not only by those who live life with no thought of art or its significance, but by artists themselves. This is what I mean when I speak of " the infection of literature by politics," and " the writers who allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the evil forces, the death-influences."

Humanity will be saved by the few, perhaps a handful only, who have the strength to maintain through the welter of suffering, destruction and sin, an unsullied integrity, a perfectly clear and unvitiated vision of truth. The present crisis of civilization is due to a deep misunderstanding and consequent shattering of the fundamental spiritul laws, which laws alone govern both life and art.[1]

The poet and the prophet (this, again, verges on a false distinction: the greatest poets are inevitably prophets, and the greatest prophets poets; two obvious examples being Shelley and Isaiah) are blessed—and, one might say, cursed —with the capacity to see truth. In a world of lies and falsity this capacity can easily prove an apparent curse, not only to the poet himself, but to his associates. As Browning remarks:

> . . . here's the plague
> That all this trouble comes of telling truth.

"Telling truth" inevitably leads to trouble, but once truth has been seen, it must be told, no matter what the consequences. There is only one Truth, many apparent "truths." Hence the confusion. Hence the prevalent belief that the present European conflict can be attributed to causes which in actual fact are only symptoms of a deep-rooted disease of long standing. Wars are fought, we are told, to establish certain truths, certain invaluable principles. But during the process, essential Truth is inevitably lost, and cannot be glimpsed again until the welter of destruction is ended, and a measure of peace re-established. And although the great poet and the prophet maintain throughout the unsullied vision of Truth, their "teaching" cannot be direct—"didactic" because spiritual realities

[1] It is dangerous to make distinctions between "life" and "art." To a clearer vision it would no doubt be evident that life itself is so magnificent a miracle that beside it art pales into the merest mirror-reflection. Often the creative artist is baffled by this perception, when wrestling with the impossibility of conveying, through music, on canvas, in stone or in words, the quality of certain significant moments or impressions, when suddenly and inexplicably the veil separating the Actual from the Real is broken and there is a momentary knowledge that all sense of separation is delusion. But to convey the quality of this certainty, this divinity irradiating all life, is, *in its totality*, beyond the artist's power, although in the greatest art the intensity of the need powerfully impregnates words, sounds, colour, form, and the reflection is vivid, living, and creatively significant.

cannot of their very nature be imparted in this way. The poet is better employed in proclaiming the power of beauty than in exposing the false power of ugliness, since the vision of beauty so revealed inevitably, *though by indirect means*, exposes the evil of ugliness; in contemplating and declaring the enduring influence of good rather than protesting against the temporal triumph of evil. Affirmation of truth has more power than denial of falsehood. Argument does not convince. But quiet and persistent affirmation of deeply-held beliefs, beliefs immediately known, and ratified by experience, will eventually work miracles.

The prophetic poet has no choice but to proclaim his knowledge of truth, and in that element of "no choice" lies his invincible power. But his work is not *consciously* didactic. The dictionary definition of didactic, "adapted or *intended* to teach" implies precisely that lack of freedom which is the antithesis of the genuine poetic experience.[1] Wordsworth often provides good examples of didacticism; many passages in *The Excursion*, for example, as also in *The Prelude* (in many ways a magnificent poem) are obviously "intended to teach," and the result is dreary and weighty, rousing the reader, not to noble conduct or exalted desires, but more often to irritation and impatience. Whereas in *Prometheus Unbound*, and in much of Shelley's finest poetry, the vision of beauty, true freedom, and spiritual power has such a potency that the contemplation of social and other world-evils becomes, *by contrast*, intolerable, and there is an urgent impulse to action. Similarly, in the New Testament, the value lies not so much in the ethical teaching, which in point of fact is not predominant, as in the beauty and power of the spirit of Christ irradiating its pages.

At a time of world-crisis the creative artist has a unique function: the defence of the spiritual fortress, guarding the citadel of truth from the ceaseless onslaughts of falsehood. But he must fight *with his own weapons*, not with the enemy's, wielding only the power of the Spirit:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

[1] There is, of course, a certain "compulsion" in the creative act, but compulsion of a different nature, not nullifying the concept of freedom.

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.[1]

and the only defence is "the whole armour of God." The poet and the prophet are called to fight against the *spiritual* wickedness of the world, for they have a vision of the high places, and know where the roots of our evils are nourished. And evil can only be overcome by good.

Poets are "makers"; all creative artists essentially, primarily and ultimately, are builders. It follows that the destruction of war is for them a peculiar violation. It also follows that in a period of destruction they must concentrate more passionately than ever on their unique function of *creativeness*.

The stories of the Old Testament proclaim again and again salvation through the few, the "saving remnant." "God's instant men call years" has not altered the fundamental values, the laws—which of their very nature are changeless and indeed unchangeable. The issue for men of vision is as plain as in the days of Noah or Elijah.

DALLAS KENMARE.

[1] Epistle to the Ephesians vi, 12.

OF HEAVEN

LONG not for heaven's transfiguration:
To-day, in earth's bright air,
A pearled and purpled Avalon
May rise up anywhere.
In resurrection may unfold
Song from sorrow, colour from cold,
Hope may bloom out of despair.
Up from the gravecloth a spirit may stand,
No blood upon foot, no blood upon hand,
If heaven has won.
A spirit may harvest the fruited hill,
Never to wish for or gather his fill,
If life has begun.
Where, heart with heart, raised spirits go,
The crocus breaks through the crusted snow,
Blue in the sun. KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN.

THE PREMIER POET OF AUSTRALIA: C. J. BRENNAN

CHRISTOPHER BRENNAN (1870–1932) is an Australian poet who deserves far more attention than he has received in Great Britain and other European countries, where indeed it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that there is no knowledge of him at all. This is not altogether surprising, for his work is practically unobtainable outside Australia, and even there it is not easy to come by, having been out of print for no small number of years; his so-called friends in Australia have lacked the little energy and enterprise required to bring out a new and complete edition of at least his poems (if not of all his writings, for his work includes critical articles and important contributions to scholarship), although it is now more than seven years since he died; and so knowledge of him is limited to the few not happily chosen pieces published in *The Oxford Book of Australasian Verse*, a volume distinguished more by incompetence than selective felicity, and far from being adequately representative of what is best or most notable in the poetic achievement of the Austral continent.[1]

Essentially, or even in externals or accidentals, Brennan

[1] For example, in this extraordinary anthology Gordon, who on this side of the world is commonly (and one might also say officially) believed to be the most considerable of Australian poets, is represented by eight pieces, enjoying a sovereign space of twenty pages and more; Harpur, a minor poet if ever there was, by six of his exercises in abortive rhetoric; Archibald Strong, a poet even less than minor, by no less than ten pieces; Blanche E. Baughan, still lower in the hierarchy of the noteless, by six effusions; and many other nobodies are promoted from meet obscurity into the same prominence. Whereas Brennan, immeasurably and infinitely greater than them all, is made known only by four short poems (occupying the pitifully small space of three pages), and these are by no means representative of his work at its best or its most distinctive, nor do they even give an idea of his poetry at its average level. Likewise Hugh McCrae, the most noteworthy of the Australian poets after Brennan, is accorded some two and three-quarter pages, little more than is given to a certain H. M. Green (to mention only one more of the *poetae minusculi* chosen as exemplars of the antipodean genius). To be completely representative, a collection of specimens (it could not properly be called an anthology) should no doubt contain samples of mediocrity, badness and nullity, but it is ridiculous that these latter should be allotted more space than examples of the good and even of what only crassness could fail to recognize as superlative.

The aesthetic judgment of the compiler of this volume is indeed one of the curiosities or grotesqueries of the world of letters. (I refer to the edition published in 1918, five years after the book containing practically all Brennan's poetry had appeared.)

is nothing of an Australian poet; he is worlds apart from the writers to whom that label is generally and most naturally applied; stockriders, billies, swags, ringing axes, jogging or swift horses, wallabies, dingoes, the great rolling plains, the great rugged ranges, the great blue distances, the grim gaunt oppression of the bush, and all the rest of the well-known caboodle, have no place in his verse, and it is as though he had never been aware of such things; nothing of the Australian flora and fauna, of the modes of Australian life, of the distinctive Australian ethos—nothing at all of the national ambiance—ever enters even as an accessory element into the beauty of his poetry.[1] In temper, technique, atmosphere, decisive derivation, fundamental formative and directive influences and allegiances, he belongs to a tradition, or to certain lines of tradition, that are altogether of the Old World; not to England merely, but to Europe in its progress to poetry of the most supreme order.

For Brennan, like the majority of the greatest English poets, was in the fullest sense of the word a scholar; his scholarship was unquestionably the widest and profoundest, the most massive and at the same time the most delicate, that has so far been seen in Australia, and he could have held his own with the most distinguished masters of learning in other parts of the world. While yet in his nonage he was contributing to the *Classical Review*, and his knowledge of Greek literature, and in particular of the work of Aeschylus, was that of a fully equipped expert. His acquaintance with French, German and Italian literature was of the same masterly nature. In Sydney University

[1] I do not wish to imply that the literature arising from these things is deprecable, contemptible or of no account. That a certain amount of it should arise from such an environment is only natural, and there is no reason at all why within its limits it should not have excellencies of various kinds; and in actual fact excellencies there are in it: among other things, an energy of forthright realism, a gallantry of feeling, a discreet pathos, a sweep of rough-riding metre. (This is particularly true of the verses of Gordon.) I would add that at its best it is far preferable to the great mass of would-be intellectualist or primitive or otherwise pretentious eunuch-creations that have been masquerading as poetry for the past two or three decades in more sophisticated quarters of the globe. The only point I am concerned to make here is that Brennan's poetic country is totally different from that of the immense majority, and the best known, of the other writers of Australia. And of course I consider that it is altogether superior to theirs as well.

(where for some time he was a lecturer in French and German studies, and later Professor of Comparative Literature, and whence he was scandalously ejected for the flimsiest and most irrelevant of reasons), he deputized on occasion for the professors of Latin, Greek, French and German, a fact that gives some indication of his exceptionally wide range. But his scholarship was not, as is so often the case with academic purveyors of culture, that of a mere accumulator and tabulator of extraneous facts who has no access to, having no sense of, the inner life and the essential verities of literary creation in its more than menial functions. Scholarship with him was a constantly vital thing, engaging his deepest spiritual forces, to which curiosity, ingenuity and all the apparatus of research were kept in due subordination; it was continuous with his activity as a poet, and so it added to his stature as a poet. His spiritual growth was such that he was at home in the territories where poetry had advanced to its furthest points so far, and that necessarily was in the greatest of the European literatures; it was far more natural for him to move and have his artistic being there than in the Australian environment where simply through force of chance or accident he had his physical residence. To deal in the elements of that environment would have been artificial (and futile) in his case, for they were foreign to his true nature as a poet; a class of narrowly and obtusely "national" critics in Australia, not seeing this, denounce work such as his as being a factitious reproduction of literature that has nothing in common with the glorious urgencies of the grand new life of a splendid young country progressing to its own peculiar forms of greatness.

In his poetry, then, there are elements which proceed from and continue certain lines of European tradition; sometimes the very tone and accent of other poets—Keats, Shelley, Swinburne, Yeats, Hugo, Baudelaire—is distinguishable in his verse, but even here his own voice is not lost, and is as it were only confirmed by the concordant cadence of a master; he is never merely imitative or plagiary: he has assimilated the strongest influences into the

integrity of his own very strong individuality. But far more frequently, where influences are concerned, it is not so easy to put one's critical finger on any specific phrase or line or passage and say "Here of course is something in the spirit or manner of such and such a writer." In these cases the action of other poets on him is intangible, and, as it were, dispersed. Thus that of Milton appears much more often in the progressive and gathering structure of the verse, the cunning of effects of involution, than in more definite points of detail; and it is chiefly if not exclusively in this matter of architectural elaboration that there appears in his poetry the influence of Aeschylus, one of the master forces in his life, to whom he devoted perhaps the largest part of his exploratory thought as a scholar. At its best his verse is remarkable for qualities of this category, rather than for purely singing or strictly lyrical qualities. It has an amplitude, a reach of massive effect, that gives it a sort of Alpine sublimity. It is "builded enormously," to use a phrase from one of his own poems. In saying that it is not strictly lyrical, I do not mean to suggest that it is poor in music; its architectonics are sonorous with no small amount of music, but it is a subdued music, a quiet prevalence of brooding undertones, or rather of a monotone, a species of recitative that never rises into the full liberty of song.

The main influence in Brennan's life, however, was that of French Symbolism as formulated (and in part also applied) by Stéphane Mallarmé, its chief expositor and master. It would take too long to give anything like an adequate statement here of even the cardinal or primary articles of Symbolist doctrine[1]. Suffice it to say that according to this doctrine certain things are symbolical of other things, not only of other things in this world, but of things in a transcendental world of higher realities; and that the poet, instead of aiming at depicting things in their present immediate aspect, should endeavour to convey something of the transcendental reality with which they are corres-

[1] I would refer those interested in the subject to my essay on the aesthetic of Mallarmé published in *The Nineteenth Century and After* of July 1934.

pondent. This article of doctrine, further developed, leads to the assertion that statement in all its forms (including description and narrative), which has been the mode of by far the greater part of literature in the past, is not the true function or end of the art of letters, or at least not of the highest kind of poetry. For Mallarmé, the literature of statement is merely a species of reporting, and as such he holds it in very low esteem. The true object of the poet should be to work in terms of suggestion much more than of statement. Rather than describe a thing in its concrete reality he should evoke it in its ideality (this term being understood in the Platonic sense); he should refer to it only "allusively," in subtle indirect ways that will maintain it in its spirituality. As a stage in this process he should create a shade, a gloom, an obscurity round it; and discourse concerning it should be suppressed to such an extent that an impression of silence, and even of absence, will be created; a conclusion which to most readers will doubtless seem irritatingly paradoxical. Anyhow, suggestion is the grand principle of this aesthetic; suggestion rich in mystery and far prolongation into a world of transcendental presences. And this leads to an insistence that the musical resources of words (that is, of words in combination) is the paramount, the fundamentally governing, of the forces at work in poetry. The greatest poetry, according to Mallarmé, should be a kind of incantation, an operation of magic or sorcery, a dealing in the ultimate potencies of the universe.

All this of course is not altogether new; a certain amount of it had been at least implicit in some of the poetry of the past; but hitherto, when it had occurred, it had been only sporadic and incidental: Mallarmé aimed at making it constant, and at eschewing as far as possible all those other elements which had accompanied it, and which indeed had been considered the principal business of poetry.

The title of Brennan's first book of poems, *Towards the Source* (1897), indicates his Symbolist tendencies: his object is to move away from description, etc., towards the springs where poetry rises in its purest state. But it cannot be said

that the attempt was strikingly successful; there are merits here and there, of course, but there is nothing that would ensure high station to the author even in the field of Australian poetry. It was only after he had read and made part of himself Mallarmé's doctrines (which had not been published up to this point) that he advanced to really big work. This was in *Poems*, published towards the end of 1913.[1] Here are applied—for the first time in English—the Symbolist principles I have defined in all too scanty a manner above. Brennan is now moving "in the devious ways of dream"; he is following "cortèges of dream" that "fill imaginary avenues of gloom"; he is seeking to convey the "hint of nameless things revealed," in verse whose music is incantatory in the manner desiderated by the chief exponent of Symbolism. The region of his poetry is now a place of vast penumbra, through which strike as it were revelations of far-withdrawn mysteries beyond. . . . Which of course is another way of saying that his poetry is obscure; the important thing to remember is that it is deliberately obscure, as is that of Mallarmé (only the latter's is much more so), in accordance with a very definite aesthetic doctrine; the obscurity is an integral part of its technical procedure, and also one of its most valuable spiritual elements; to try to clarify it would be to go counter to one of the main intentions of the artist, and to reduce the poetry to something it was never meant to be; indeed, it would be to make of it something rather the contrary of its true nature.

Of course, all of even the mature work of Brennan is not of the class just described; some of it is Symbolist to a very small extent, or not Symbolist at all. But his greatest poetry is that where he is working most fully in terms of the furthest-reaching of the doctrines of Symbolism.

Another very important influence acting on him is that of Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and other of the German Romantics. Here again it would take too long to give anything like an adequate account of doctrines that are

[1] The poems of *Towards the Source* were republished in this volume along with the much more important new pieces.

somewhat complex.[1] I will merely say that certain of them, those concerning Romantic Irony (which has nothing to do with irony as ordinarily understood), powerfully reinforced the Symbolist principles to which we have referred above. According to these particular theories, the artist should never give the impression of having achieved a fully finished work; he should rather aim at producing something that should seem in progress towards perfection; he should therefore work in terms of hints, of suggestion, instead of in those of hard and fast definite statement. For one of the grand principles of universal life, and especially of spiritual life, is the avoidance of fixity or arrest, a constant advance from one point of achievement to another on still higher levels.

Under these two great influences, that of Mallarmé and that of the German Romantics, Brennan arrived at what he himself in an essay described as "the fundamental paradox of poetry": poetry must have everything to say and yet must not say it; and it will doubtless seem to many that this cannot but issue in blank nothingness, but it may also issue in a plenitude not to be achieved by the aesthetic principles of which it is a negation.

After these introductory and explanatory remarks (more necessary in the case of a poet like Brennan than with most writers), it will be well to give a few specimens of the work which is their only *raison d'être*. There will be space for only a few poems or fragments of poems; perhaps THE POETRY REVIEW will print more in subsequent issues; it is even possible that some English publisher may be willing to render a service to poetry by bringing out an edition of Brennan's work, or at least of the more notable portions of it.

What night is this, made denser, in his breast
or round him, suddenly, or first confest
after its gradual thickening complete?
as tho' the mighty current, bearing fleet
the unresting stars, had here devolved its lees,

[1] I have treated this matter in a book on Brennan written for an Australian publisher and issued in 1934; but it is more than probable that this work is not obtainable in the northern hemisphere.

stagnant, contempt, on recreant destinies ;
as tho' a settling of tremendous pens,
above the desolate dream, had shed immense
addition to the incumbence of despair
downward, across this crypt of stirless air,
from some henceforth infrangible attitude,
upon his breast, that knows no dawn renew'd,
builded enormously, each brazen stage,
with rigour of his hope in hopeless age
mummied, and look that turns his thew to stone :
even hers, that is his strangling sphinx, made known
with, on her breast, his fore-erected tomb,
engraven deep, the letters of his doom.

* * *

Twice now that lucid fiction of the pane
dissolves, the sphere that winter's crystal bane
still-charm'd to glass the sad metempsychose
and futile ages of the suffering rose—
what, in its halt, the weary mood might show.
Earth stirs in me that stirs with roots below,
and distant nerves shrink with the lilac mist
of perfume blossom'd round the lure that, kist,
is known hard burn o'erflaked and cruel sting.
I would this old illusion of the spring
might perish once with all her airs that fawn
and traitor roses of the wooing dawn :
for none hath known the magic dream of gold
come sooth, since that first surge of light outroll'd
heroic, broke the august and mother sleep
and foam'd, and azure was the rearward deep ;
and Eden afloat among the virgin boughs
fused, song-jewel sudden, and flesh was blithe with vows
to tread, divine, under the naked air ;
nor knew, alas ! self-doom'd thro' time to bear
lewd summer's dusty mock and roses' fall,
and cynic spring, returning, virginal.

* * *

Dusk lowers in this uneasy pause of rain ;
a blackness clings and thickens on the pane
and damp grows ; westward only, watery pale,
two yellow streaks, wan glory, slowly fail :
night shall be loud and thick with driving spears.—
And this was also in the haunting years
this life hath never known, nor this abode,
when the lone window watch'd the lonely road
winding into the exiled west, across
the desolate plain, with, seldom on its fosse

tipt black against grey gloom, a poplar spire ;
and I could know the sunset's broken fire
burn'd sombrely in many a leaden glass
whose look was dead amid the morbid grass
where never a dancing foot of harvest came
and ways were lost, a land of vanish'd name.

* * *

Last, since a pinch of dust may quench the eyes
that took the azure curve of stainless skies
and still the fiercest heart, he seeks to whelm
infinite yearning with a little realm,
beating together with ungentle hands,
enslaved, the trembling spawn of generous lands,
whom he shall force, a busy swarm, to raise,
last bulwarks of his whelming discontent,
heaven-threatening Babels, iron Ninevehs
square-thought with rigid will, a monument
of stony rage in high defiant stones
eternized with blasphemous intent,
and carve the mountain-cone to hide his bones,
a wonder to blank tribes of shrunken days :
but in that cave before his upstart gates
where elder night endures unshaken, waits
that foe of settled peace, the smiling sphinx,
or foul Echidna's mass'd insidious links,
reminding him that all is vanities ;
and when, at last, o'er his nine roods he lies,
stretch'd in the sarcophage whereover grief
makes way before one huge gust of relief,
not the wing-blast of his vain shade shall drive
his wizen'd captives from their dungeon-hive,
and make a solitude about his bed ;
nor the chill thought petrific his low head
exudes in rays of darkness, that beyond
this perturb'd sphere congeal, an orb of dread :
I, Lilith, on his tomb immensely throned,
with viewless face and viewless vans outspread ;
in the wide waste of his unhallow'd work,
calm coils of fear, my serpent-brood shall lurk ;
and I shall muse above the little dust
that was the flesh that held my word in trust.

* * *

What gems chill glitter yon, thrice dipt
in dusky Styx, or tears unshed
the spheres, in icy exile stript,
congeal in midnight's gaze of lead ?

O thou crown'd caitiff, o'er our head
whereon thine agelong wounds have dript
the dark arms of thy passion spread
dwarf the vast vault to a hard crypt.

Round thine eternal hour of woe
the abyss urges, a rigid throe,
whose woeful dark sees nought emerge,

save these, their consolation vain
and frozen on the helpless verge,
lonely, ecstatic fires of pain.

* * *

The window is wide and lo ! beyond its bars
dim fields of fading stars
and cavern tracts, whence the great store of tears
that Beauty all the years
hath wept in wanderings of the eyeless dark,
remembering the long cark
whereunder we, her care, are silent bow'd,
invades with numbing shroud
this dwindling realm of listless avatars.
Dim fields of fading stars,
and shall yet ye with amaranth rapture burn
and maiden grace return
sprung soft and sudden on the fainting night,
rose passioning to white ;
or must our task remain and hopeless art
that sickeneth the heart
from yon dull embers to evoke the ghost
of the first garden lost,
sad necromancers we ? Then let the blast,
that waked you ancient, cast
into the deeps your useless lagging dearth,
O blazon'd shame of Earth,
who then might hail the last oblivion,
knowing you doomward blown
before the advance of night's relentless cars,
dim fields of fading stars !

All of Brennan's work is not on this level : not a little of it is marked by frustration, and the frustration is not merely that of a mind that has failed to reach security ; it affects the very texture and substance of the verse, and is particularly seen in rhythmic weakness. But it is undeniable that there is real greatness in poetry of the sort quoted, and

it is not too much to say that, so far in the present century, nothing better has been accomplished in English; it is indeed highly doubtful if during this period anything so remarkable has been done in any part of the poetical world. It is probable—it is in fact certain—that such work will never be popular in any country, and least of all in Australia, where there is more and more a reaction from European values, and a noisy demand for literature that shall be deliberately " national " (as if any great literature had ever aimed at being primarily anything of the kind!). But it is safe to assume that Brennan will always enjoy the esteem—and something more than the esteem—of those who love poetry in its purest form; and he must always be interesting to the student of poetry in general, as the first writer to apply fairly consistently in English the most esoteric doctrines of the French Symbolist school.

Mr. H. M. Green, who has brought out an opuscule on Brennan,[1] has taken care to have B.A., LL.B. printed after his name. That such labels should figure on a work of *belles lettres* will strike readers in civilized circles as odd in the extreme; they have absolutely nothing to do with the Republic or rather the Aristocracy of Letters, and a writer possessed of an elementary sense of literary decency or fitness would not dream of making this quite irrelevant display of them. Even in Australia B.A.'s must be nearly as plentiful as—rabbits, shall we say?; and the glitter of such badges is hardly calculated to dazzle the natives of that country, or at least those of them likely to give attention to Mr. Green's book. But Mr. Green probably felt that he must clap all the weight he could on to his authority as a literary pundit, and so he brought forward his B.A., and, to clinch the matter, he threw in a legal degree as well, although even the most naïve could not suppose that it had the remotest connexion with any literary subject at all; and doubtless had he had a diploma on metallurgy or plumbing he would have solemnly foisted it too upon the attention of the world. It is quite true that he had need of

[1] Angus and Robertson, Ltd., Sydney and London, 1939.

all the supporting kudos he could command, however ludicrously foreign to the business in hand, for his book could not maintain itself on any of its intrinsic qualities. It is so poor, so weak and bad in all respects, that one wonders how it ever found its way into print at all. It adds no new truth or fact to what was already established regarding the life, the personality, the mind and the literary art of Brennan; where it does not merely repeat or rehash —frequently with no true understanding—what predecessors had written, it encumbers the subject with ignorance, error and nonsense that would have moved Brennan himself to a protest of angry disgust.

To give any faithful history of Brennan's intellectual and artistic life and to provide any illuminating account of his aims and methods as a poet, one must possess as a primary prerequisite exact and first-hand and living knowledge of the cultural forces whence he received his chief inspiration and his main directions. This, for reasons we have indicated, is more imperative in his case than in that of most other writers; and this is one of the things in which Mr. Green is manifestly and most wofully deficient. Whenever he speaks of the forces, and especially the foreign forces, with which Brennan had decisive affinities, and whose influence confirmed and enlarged him, one has the impression that he is not speaking out of any fulness of immediate knowledge of those forces. He talks as one who knows them only superficially and scrappily, or at least in a vague second-hand way, and not in their essential reality. This is particularly true of the French poets who meant so much to Brennan, and most of all of Mallarmé, whose action on him was more strongly determinant than that of any other writer (at least in certain respects of far-reaching importance). He knows Mallarmé so ill that he actually states that this very clear and incisive mind was disabled by "some idiosyncracy," which "prevented him from expressing himself as other people did." It is true that he would have been incapable of expressing himself as Mr. Green does, but his letters, his books *Thèmes anglais* and *Les mots anglais*, and even parts of *Divagations*, show that he could when he

chose write as clearly and simply as anybody of ordinary education and intelligence. Being ignorant of this, and of many other things, it is only natural that Mr. Green should fail to see for what profound reasons he deliberately adopted a species of obscurity in his most ambitious writings. Mr. Green is one of those people who go to encyclopaedias for instruction in such matters, and he respectfully quotes a French one, which he calls "famous," as a supreme and final authority for the fact (or fancy) that Mallarmé's work is "unintelligible," a mystery to which no possible key can be found. It is certainly unintelligible to Mr. Green and many others, judged by the norms of ordinary expression; but it is part of its fundamental nature that it was never meant to be amenable to those norms; it is never unintelligible aesthetically, when read as poetry of the kind it was intended by the author it should be. Mr. Green also imagines that the Symbolism in which Mallarmé dealt was the "invention of a group of French poets in the eighties of the last century," which is a choice specimen of the many howlers he commits.

In view of such crudities of knowledge and judgment it is only to be expected that Mr. Green should go badly wrong in his appreciation of the work of Brennan. Having failed to see that Mallarmé's obscurity is not due to a congenital defect, and thus being impervious to its true import, he is ill at ease before that of Brennan, although he pays lip service to it in a constrained perfunctory way. He even once had the impudence (we learn from his elucubration) to remonstrate with Brennan about it, and to ask him how he could expect to find readers if he persisted in these devices; he lays it down magisterially that Brennan "carried it too far at times"—no doubt precisely in the passages where his poetry is greatest and most happily in accord with the central articles of the creed of Symbolism. In these cases Mr. Green finds it merely "a kind of crossword puzzle"—which we might have known without being told so by the poor sufferer himself. This revealing critique of Brennan's obscurity, one of the cardinal elements of his technique, is only one of the things that show Mr. Green

to have been the last person to undertake the duties of showman and expositor of work such as this.

Having a very scanty and erroneous knowledge of French literature, he altogether underestimates its importance in Brennan's career as a poet. In his list of literatures where Brennan found " the factors required for the attainment of the grand style," that of France is accorded no place. Yet it has many notable models of that style, which had a powerful influence on Brennan. His passionate devotion to that literature, his assimilation of certain of its masters, their shaping action on his thought and moods, is one of the principal facts in his intellectual biography. But to Mr. Green's uninstructed vision there is " nothing French about him "—except his debt to Mallarmé, and even this is seriously undervalued by this ill-equipped critic.

Dismissing French influences as well-nigh negligible, Mr. Green is at great pains to show that Brennan was a true-blue Australian poet, that you can find the fair-dinkum goods in him all right. His strenuous exertions here are really funny. Distinctly Baudelairian verses in which Brennan apparently makes incidental reference to a library in which he worked are triumphantly flourished by this strange exegetist as proof positive that the Australian environment was a source of inspiration for him! Even that does not give the full measure of Mr. Green's capacity as a star performer in this very interesting line. In another poem Brennan makes some sort of allusion—highly sublimated—to a tram-ride in winter past a church to a building with a " four-turreted square tower," and this also, to Mr. Green's mind, is cogent and clinching evidence that the Australian environment plays a capital part in his poetry! Exactly the same sort of tram-ride might have been taken in many parts of London and in many other places of the earth; but Mr. Green is victim of the remarkable illusion that such things are the exclusive appanage of the Australian scene. The same comment applies to all the other items of his laboriously eked out list of what he takes to be distinctive Australian properties.[1]

[1] The oily water of wharves, strong sunlight, exuberant summer, the shrill note

His criticism of Brennan's diction is no less entertaining. The lines

> —shall we be cleans'd and how? I only pray,
> red flame or deluge, may that end be soon!

in which Brennan inveighs against the misery of the slums, are "crudely melodramatic" to so pure a taste as his. Mr. Green cannot distinguish between melodrama and *saeva indignatio*, between crudity and appropriate energy of angry denunciation. Again, he denounces "search each" as a "horrible cacophony"; but he is not aware of the rudimentary fact that any element of a verse must be judged in the larger setting of the verse as a whole; and, judged thus, this collocation of words is quite unexceptionable, the total verse forming a harmony acceptable to any but incompetent ears.[1]

He denounces also Brennan's "use of one part of speech for another"; this is Calibanish, "merely irritating," to one of standards so sovereignly right as his own. What is the sort of misuse that disturbs him? That of which the phrase "the mighty current . . . stagnant, contempt" is an illustration; where, he says, the word "contempt" is a noun used for an adjective! Most schoolgirls could tell him that it is nothing of the sort, but a perfectly respectable past participle, and so an adjective, and they would refer him to a well-known line of Spenser: "Let not my small demand be so contempt."[2]

of the cicada, rain falling in the dark, the restless sea, winds at various stages of temperature, birds wheeling in the sky. . . . It looks too bad to be true, but true indeed it is. Even a mediocre intelligence would not need to be told that all these things, separately or together or in combinations of various sizes, might be found in the South of France, to name only one of numerous possible localities; and they might equally well be part of any poet's Country of Dream, as in very fact they were in the case of Brennan. They are as general—as little individually local—as references of the sort can possibly be.

[1] "Send thy keen airy spirit to search each vein."

[2] Mr. Green shows a like ignorance in his choice of examples of what he takes to be Brennan's use of adverbs for adjectives, another of the things which he finds "irritating," and also "unnecessary and perverse"—on the part of a scholar who is to him as a Titan to a pygmy, but whom he persists in treating as if the rôles were reversed. "Seldom" and "soon" are not only and exclusively adverbs, as he thinks; they have a well-established idiomatic use as adjectives also. Brennan, as true and competent lovers of the Word often do, reached back to the aboriginal nature of terms, and felt them charged with fuller potentialities than they have in discourse of a workaday sort. Thus on occasion (the more especially as he had a full

Mr. Green girds also at certain of Brennan's rhymes; he objects, for instance, to rhymes which are approximate instead of fully correspondent (to which he gives the very odd name of "near rhymes"), and here he speaks as the most elementary schoolmaster on the technique of verse construction. He implies that there are certain hard and fast external rules, which have a positive saving value in themselves, and to which the poet must conform if he wishes to attain a tolerable standard of excellence. This of course reveals a wild misconception of the nature and processes of aesthetic creation, and of the criteria to which they are properly amenable. All that matters in art is the quality of the result, and the artist is free to achieve it by whatsoever means he happens to find convenient. The rhymes of a detestable poem may be perfect according to the norms of Mr. Green; those of an admirable poem—admirable in form as in other respects—may be far from perfect according to the text-book regulations of this castigator of the art of his betters. He is obviously ignorant of the fact that approximate rhymes may on occasion be deliberately employed by subtle workers in verse in order to secure certain effects. Some of the French poets, for example, for whom Brennan had a special predilection, not infrequently used this class of rhymes. Or, to take an example nearer home, Tennyson, one of the most careful and delicate artists in poetic structure, showed what masterly use might be made of them.[1] And yet Mr. Green

philological knowledge of German) he would certainly be conscious of the fact that "seldom" is cognate with the German "seltsam," meaning *rare* or *strange*; and very probably he would also feel that it was cognate with the Gothic "sildaleiks," which has the meaning of *marvellous*. On occasion; and just such an occasion was when he was seeking to qualify "waftures" in a *Prelude* to a section called *Secreta silvarum*, into which rare and wonderful things were constantly to obtrude their presence. Mr. Green would do well to extend his exiguous knowledge a little, and to ponder rudiments such as these before rushing into preserves where he can only have the figure of an interloper. These etymological considerations will no doubt seem fantastic pedantry to one of his calibre. Perhaps it will mean a little more to him to learn that Shakespeare used "seldom" as an adjective, and if this is not enough for him, we will direct his attention to the fact that Charles Lamb too used it in the same "irritating" way.

[1] As in the following quatrain, for example:

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace. (over)

categorically avers that " in Brennan's day " only the Pre-Raphaelites employed them, and that it was " only out of carelessness " that they did so! Evidently, his knowledge of English literature is as remarkably erroneous as his knowledge of French literature—and of practically everything else on which he makes his confident pronouncements.

A section of Brennan's verses called *The Wanderer* do not easily lend themselves to harmonious scansion in terms of traditional English prosody, and it is very probable that here he was trying the experiment of employing in English certain metrical forms of ancient Greece. There is nothing extravagant in such a supposition; many English poets have essayed the experiment, and Brennan was particularly likely to do so, for he was steeped in Greek poetry, and the metres of Aeschylus ran constantly in his head. Moreover, the verses in question, scanned according to Greek measures, are more rhythmically satisfying than if read according to English schemes. But Mr. Green will have none of this; Brennan, he roundly affirms, would not have been so " foolish " as to attempt anything such! That in spite of the somewhat damaging admission that it isn't all plain sailing if one tries to subject them to orthodox English scansion, and that " several structures " are possible if this mensuration is adopted. Mr. Green's own floundering efforts to treat them in this way certainly do not inspire confidence.

He further emits the astonishing judgment that attempts to employ classical measures in English have never in any case been " successful." Has he never read Swinburne's *Sapphics* and his *Hendecasyllabics*, to name no more than two examples? But perhaps he would persist in torturing their beautiful classical measures into a grotesque semblance of

The lapse from the strong " z " of *trees* to the soft " s " of *Peace*, so far from being " careless," as Mr. Green would no doubt declare it to be, is a deliberate effect of artistry of a very high order; it confirms and consummates, as it were, the whole spiritual purport of these four lovely lines. Coming as it does, it physically conveys something of the *recueillement* of the finely elaborated beauty of English county life at the slow closing in of evening. It ought not to be necessary to say that the " Pre-Raphaelite " Rossetti, who was a cunning and a great artist in verse, used approximate rhymes with a like high end in view. (It is news that the Pre-Raphaelites were still writing in Brennan's day, as the scholarly Mr. Green informs our ignorance they were.)

English rhythms, nice, plain, homely, unpretentious, with no sort of high-brow nonsense about them—in spite of Swinburne's clear indication that their metrical structure is indeed Greek. It is equally possible of course that he might not see this latter fact; taking *Sapphics* to mean that the poem is on the subject of an unrespectable form of eroticism (which as a matter of fact it isn't); and as for *Hendecasyllabics*, if he ever got as far as looking it up in a dictionary, he probably imagined that it was any eleven syllables containing any metrical pattern caprice may wish to elicit from them. There is no saying what may not happen in the case of such critics.[1]

[1] In talking of classical measures in English I have two things in mind:

(i) Measures which are not part of the normal or traditional repertory of English metrical forms, the division into feet being indicated either by a more extensive use of quantity than is common in ordinary English verse composition, or else—and more frequently—by the incidence of stress as employed in English poetry written on orthodox lines.

(ii) Measures—iambs, trochees, anapaests, dactyls, spondees—, the external form of which belongs no less to English than to Greek prosody, but where division into feet is marked at least as much by quantity as by stress, and sometimes actually more so.

The important thing is that in both these cases scansion in terms of ordinary English prosody would deform the metrical quality of the line and make of it something other than the poet meant it to be.

A good example of the first class is the following line from Swinburne:

What strange faces of dreams, voices that called, hands that were raised to wave

– ⏑ | – ⏑ ⏑ – | – ⏑ ⏑ – | – ⏑ ⏑ – | ⏑ –

Here, and in all the verses of the poem, the predominant foot is quadrisyllabic (the choriamb), and it does not belong to normal English prosody. Any attempt to scan the line in traditional English terms will lead to disaster; and as a warning to metrical fumblers, bunglers and desecrators such as Mr. Green, Swinburne took care to entitle the poem *Choriambics*; just as he had similarly made it clear in the case of other pieces that Greek and not English scansion was to be applied. Mr. Green will have to face this inconvenient fact, even although he considers Swinburne "foolish" for writing poetry of this kind.

As examples of the second class we may cite Swinburne's *Sapphics* and Tennyson's *Alcaics*. Here again, to read the lines in a straightforward traditional English way, taking account only of the obvious stresses, would be to make a barbaric mess of them.

In *The Wanderer* Brennan is very probably making frequent use of certain quadrisyllabic Greek measures, division into feet being indicated chiefly by stress; but quantity also plays a part. It is very probable too that in certain lines he was experimenting in a five-syllable foot, the dochmius, the basic form of which is $\overbrace{\text{⏑ – | – ⏑ –}}$. This measure is often used by Aeschylus and other Greek poets to express agitation, despair, crisis—precisely the feelings which are uppermost in this section of Brennan's poetry.

A Mr. J. G. Cornell, in a review of Mr. Green's book published in *The Australian Quarterly* of September last, finds that Mr. Green is beautifully right in his pronouncements on this question. He thinks it "incredible" that Brennan should have

These are only a few samples of Mr. Green's erudition, acumen and critical *finesse :* kindness forbids us to carry the instructive revelation to greater lengths. A proudly displayed B.A., fortified by an LL.B., will not prevent the world from proceeding to the due and very sad conclusions.

Our limited choice from the embarrassment of Mr. Green's peculiar riches has shown that at all points he is entirely without competence to expound and evaluate the work of Brennan (or of any other writer of a loftier stature than that of Martin Tupper). Even if he were capable of discussing Brennan's diction and technique without falling into the grotesque blunders to which we have called attention, he would still be disqualified from getting at the fundamental reality of Brennan as a poet. For to him Brennan is in the last analysis no more than a plain ordinary fellow, just a man in the street like Tom, Dick, Harry—and Mr. Green himself. " Ultimately," says this master of insight, Brennan is occupied in his poetry merely with " the trials and troubles of every man "—a mirific statement that takes the breath away even when one has grown used to so much else that is strange in Mr. Green. Brennan, of course, was a man of great humanity ; and he had his full share of trials and troubles ; but he had two lives, and when the poet in him was in the ascendant he moved into a world and on to heights where the preoccupations of " every man " had a very small place, if any place at all, and where he was concerned with things of an altogether different order. Of this other and higher world, that of the essential Brennan, Mr. Green has never had the least glimpse.

Mr. Green's own manner of writing (even when all allowance is made for the fact that his disquisitions were composed as lectures) would make one doubt whether he was qualified to speak on the art of Brennan or on any literary art of the higher sort. For the first thing that strikes one is that he is in no degree a literary craftsman ;

employed Greek metres in English. We will leave him to enjoy such distinguished company, and will merely remark that his production, in mental depth and reach, aesthetic insight, and expression, is typical of by far the greater part of the very small number of contributions to the humaner studies emanating from the academic world of Australia. These contributions usually strike one as the efforts of intellectual homuncules whose education is in need of very serious attention.

his writing never once takes on even any of the more elementary qualities of style. Rhythm, structure, creative felicity of phrase, even sure seemliness of taste[1]—nothing of these and of the other things that go to make the art of the Word is to be found in his modes of expression. It is a question whether one whose own speech is rather a negation of style can be expected to have any ear or vision for the virtues which are the soul of the more poetic kinds of literary creation.

RANDOLPH HUGHES.

[1] Cf. ". . . the Book of Lilith, in which clause is piled on clause, sentence on sentence, until one sometimes feels as though one were being carried in a great car up a long road in the mountains, so that each time one thinks it is the summit, a new curve unrolls out of the last." In any of its parts this rhetoric is tawdry and cheap, and is the sort of stuff baboos delight to turn out; but the intrusion of the lumbering car into even sublimity of this spurious kind is an atrocity of taste which the most chaotically turgid of baboos would not be found committing.

THE CYPRESS

THE cypress stands up sheer and stark,
Into the sunlight, out of the dark;—
Out of th' invisible into the visible,
All of God's thought in him that is transmissible
Through his grave form, so slim and straight,
His changeless leaf and sombre state.

He grows amid the stones and dust,
Austere, but rooted in strong trust,
Bowing to the lightest breeze;
Yet is he proudest of all trees;—
And has he not good cause for pride
Towering up where the high winds ride?

He points for ever towards the sky,
A pennoned lance, a plume or spear;—
His darkness holds your quiet eye,
His silence charms your rested ear;—
Yet all his gesture is one cry
Of "Hallelujah!"—if you can hear.

Florence. HAROLD GOAD.

ON A MODERN TRADITIONALIST POET

LET this of him be said,
Now he is dead,
That he did hymn those sempiternal things
Which on unswerving wings
Traverse, serene, sublime
The liquid air of time,
Nor ever stained his page
With the sick fancies of a shallow age,
But did pursue the gleam,
The unforgettable dream,
Truth's vision rapt,
Which hath ensnared, entrapped,
The holiest hearts of men,
And sought to make his pen
Trace out its mysteries
Through those high ecstasies
With which the seer, the saint,
Are made acquaint,
The beauty, God-descended, sensed and seen,
A lambent fairy sheen,
In legend, art, and song,
The tender or the strong
Urge of the sobbing strings,
The pain, the gloryings,
When music's passionate heart
Doth weld each separate part
Into one diapason
Of full-voiced, throbbing tone,
Nor for the Muses crowned
Chaotic splutterings of sound,
Nor deemed them peers of long
Roll of Homeric song,
But humbly trod
The hallowed highways of the bright-haired god,
Whose great elect, though closed their span of days,
Yet wear for singing bays
A whole world's praise,
For bardic robe wear ringing time's applause
For utterance tuned to laws

Of beauty and majestic harmony,
Wherethrough men's hearts may see
Glimmer and glow and shine
The shape of things divine.
These, these, the ways he trod
As leading up to God,
Nor acquiesced in blind
Obedience to pure mind,
Whose prophets false proclaim
Matter the end and aim,
Matter the potent charm,
Matter the sovereign balm
For life's dynamic ills,
Look down nor see the hills,
The ancient hills whose peaks
He whom God sealeth seeks;
Nor counted present loss,
Nor bowed before the gross
New deities of speed
In word or deed,
Who for their pleasure
Hunt Goodman Leisure
And Solitude his spouse
From their remote green house
Mid woodland boughs,
And drown their elfin pipings with the blare
Of savage rhythms beating the thin air,
And cramp creative spirit in the gyves
Of frigid fact till naught thereof survives
Its daylight dullness, naught its ashen fruit,
Herd thoughts, mass products, and the vain pursuit
Of empty pleasure, restlessness and noise,
Lack of stability and lack of poise,
A raucous fair of jigging puppetry.
Life's king of conquests is serenity
Achieved through ultimate beauty and the high
Emprise of noble acts and pitifulness,
Uplifting us at last above the stress
And fever of our bodily passions; this,

Perfected in full cycle, lo, it is
Which is the jewel of faultless poesy
Unto the inner eye,
The jewel of first water which enshrines
Art's quintessential lustre, the grave lines
Of the Cnidian Deméter or the face
Of Botticelli's Venus whose sweet grace
Transfigures and transmutes our painful striving
Into the happy calm of godlike living.
The stately phrase Virgilian is one
With the chaste beauty of the Parthenon,
And the Italian's tongue mellifluous
Illumines Hell, and, rapturous, carries us
To where benign, intransitory,
Reigns the unveiled Mid-Glory,
The inspirer of the stars' processions,
Prime cause and governor of all the suns,
Revealer He and quickener, who fans
Unselfish love and good desire in man's
Unresting soul and that divinity
Which waits in darkness to break bonds and be.
Wherefore let this, let this of him be said,
Now he is dead,
That though he walked perchance in loneliness
Nor won contemporary fame's caress,
He kept the faith as it was given him,
And haply glimpsed and heard the seraphim
Singing beyond the gates of visible day,
And saw at ending of the narrow way
His pilgrim feet ascended, like a gem,
Shining far off, the New Jerusalem.

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW.

UNCENSORED

TO-DAY I saw the silent snowflakes fall
And robe the town in whiteness, veiling all
The ugliness man wrought,—but Phoebus then
Looked down, and purity was lost again.

REGINALD C. EVA.

January 27th.

DO NOT BELIEVE

DO not believe
This is reality
Or actual spring:
But seen as in a glass,
These are but vivid memories of Earth
Refashioning.
We do not see the spring;
Through her hypnotic eyes,
Reflected back we see
Her own youth green in Time.
"Over this hill she came,
Thus, thus she stood
Beneath the bank's decline,
Printing the snow. . ."
She is word perfect
From continuous telling,
The seasons, parcelled, fall
In sheaves about her feet;
Will they prove all illusion
If she fall asleep?
Let her ramble on,
Old widow, wrinkled dreamer;
It is all the spring, vicarious,
We shall ever know. BRENDA F. SKENE.

EVERYMAN'S SONNET

THANK God I love! No other art is mine—
I cannot spin, nor weave, nor dance, nor sing,
Nor draw sweet music from a passive string,
Nor conjure up a picture with a line
Drawn swiftly on the paper; nor entwine
My thoughts with art into some lonely thing
Endurable, in human hearts to ring
Until the world comes to its last decline.
These things I cannot do. Nor need I weep
That others more than I possess the power
To make great music, verse, and thus to move
The hearts of many. For one thing I keep
Most freshly beautiful from hour to hour.
It's a mystery—I call it love. ANTHONY DICKINS.

OXFORD POETRY AND DISILLUSIONMENT: I

" Stir up the Fire
And strike a light
And see my jolly-boys
Act to-night."
(JOHN SHORT: *Dialogue for Mummers.*)

WHEN I came up to Oxford in 1936 I found the Oxford literary world gay and disillusioned. The intellectuals were the fastest set in Oxford. They could mostly have got firsts in schools, but preferred to get seconds and thirds and devote their time to going from one sherry party to another, writing gossip about each other in *The Cherwell* or *The Isis*, appearing in art ties and long hair at the O.U.D.S., and holding sessions to read poems by Auden, Spender, and Macneice. They took the view that Oxford was a golden ball to play with for three years and while it was theirs they would enjoy the comfort of every glitter. A good many were communists; one or two read *The Daily Worker*. There was an odd fear of the future, which in conversation was either distrusted or ignored. The best poetry written at this time was unhappy or pessimistic, above all disillusioned.

Yet beneath this rather artificial atmosphere some genuine thought and writing was accomplished. A good three-quarters of those who danced to the tune of convention were second rate or poseurs, but one or two—in many cases those who clung to the outskirts rather than to the centre—were good poets who have since published volumes or appeared in reputable magazines and anthologies.

Over all played the influence of Herbert Howarth. A slender, dark-haired man with something of the detached air of a critic he had come to Oxford with a scholarship to Christ Church. He was the most alive of anybody, and it was his fire and energy that kept intellectual Oxford awake during the period I am discussing. It was natural that with a more piercing outlook than most, a keener insight into life and literature, and an intellectual daring beyond his contemporaries he should have taken the leadership.

Through his inspiration Oxford accepted Auden and the moderns, Paul Eluard, Surrealism, French films, Kafka, Deanna Durbin (!) and Mass Observation. He organized the Oxford Mass Poem which appeared in *New Verse*. He devoted a session of the English Club to Surrealist games. He gave a public lecture on "Pope and the Giraffes." Giraffes, he exclaimed, were dons; they both had long necks. In his last year, after dragging the intellectuals panting after him for the previous three, he surprised everybody by attacking Auden, getting a first, marrying, and leaving for Egypt as Lecturer in English at the Fuad I University in Cairo.

Herbert Howarth was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant of Oxford writers before the present war, but it will be perhaps as a critic that he will win fame. His poetry suffers from obscurity, but it is sincere, individual, and full of the wild power that was in him. I have known scarcely a poem of his that was not an attack, or that did not breathe dissatisfaction or hatred. With his *Individual Despair* it is a case of:

> time will lie
> and women all die

in a country where:

> smoked pools breed
> the querulous toad.

His fine surrealist poem *Mediterranean Ode*—unfortunately too long to quote in full—commences:

> I am looking for what I have not got,
> Nor you, nor Captain Kettle, nor the girl
> Who leans by the pump liking the sun.

The same poem shows Howarth's lyrical power:

> Oh, the lovely bird, broken and burning on the water,
> Never to fly again, beating back the water,
> The water now stroking the overturned faces,
> The faces of men who began to need to die.

and again, his superb, Eliot-like vividness:

> As victimized as baby Bacchus is
> Whose laughing face is smudged out to a flower.

Here is a typical Howarth poem (*Seascape*) describing a beach concert party:

> A tawdry jester with a bunch of weeds.

The wardrobe of a cheapjack music-hall
Jettisoned the coat and red repulsive sleeves.

Thick stockings, knitted for an invalid girl,
Leave bitten flesh two inches below the skirt.
Like dangling furniture her hard legs fall.

The mad apparel finishes in a hat
Cut in velveteen from a riding-picture.
Victorian ladies following the hunt

Flashed their whips in the imperious gesture,
Rubbed fingers in the fox's tail; she makes
Bouquets of ragwort for her eye's pleasure.

The tragic clowns twitching hungry mouths,
You will see them any evening, regular as
The waves that are slipping back into themselves.

The explanation of Howarth's power and Howarth's bitterness lies perhaps in the closing paragraph of his *Chapter of Autobiography*:

"If I had been born rich I should have been sent across Europe and surfeited with sights and sounds, till my perception had grown stale. As it was I had to give to small events and ordinary vistas the excitement and ferment of my own inward powers, which were trained and sharpened in the process. But it is a bitter process, and poverty and struggle even while they form the mind hurt it, and the scars they leave never entirely cease to smart."

Directly opposed to Howarth is the quiet and solitary figure of John Short. Weak from birth, he was born of poor parents in the Lake District. In *The Testament* he says:

But where the otter of ebony
Was the trout's enemy
And the butter-coloured marsh marigolds grew
I learned to depend on aorta and thew.

In Windermere lake in October
Kicked ecstatically with arm and shoulder,
And on Glaramarra and on Pavey Ark
Conquered my terror of falling and the dark.

He spent his boyhood and adolescence working behind the counter in a grocer's shop, as a landscape gardener, and in various other kinds of manual labour. Eventually he won

a working man's scholarship to Balliol. As a poet who had been anthologized in the Faber *Poems of To-morrow* he was immediately taken up by the literary set; but he survived, retained his individuality. He might have played the part in Oxford of a lion, but he remained more like a shy boy. In a town where every party was open to him his greatest pleasure was to go for a walk in the country. His room was always full of flowers; he was always hard up. He succeeded Herbert Howarth as President of the English Club, and was one of the few people who have edited *The Cherwell* brilliantly.

It is difficult to place John Short's poetry in this survey because he remained outside all influences, kept his poetry pure like that of Marvell or Ruth Pitter. He has achieved something of the macabre in a poem entitled *Cemetry Song*. He describes a North Country wrestling match. He has written Skeltonicks to a small girl on her sixth birthday. In *Manifesto from Westmorland* he shows his sympathy with the people of his own country, the land where:

> All summer through
> The quarrymen card and sing,
> Practise the tuba, starve to buy a ring,
> And their children whistle and glower.

He goes on:

> And our hearts cannot beat without merriment.
> We must have a lightness
> In our fingers and our feet,
> And though we hunger and we ache
> More than a stubborn pride demands
> Beyond the endearment and the wage,
> A recognized extravagance,
> The yard of gypsy lace,
> The passionate, fast partner,
> And the monstrous wedding-cake.

In *Harvest* and *Six Ladder-Steps for Lent* is found this same sympathy. Here are three more examples of John Short's work:

> CAROL
> There was a Boy bedded in bracken
> Like to a sleeping snake all curled he lay
> On his thin navel turning this spinning sphere

Each feeble finger fetched seven suns away
He was not dropped in good-for-lambing weather
He took no suck when shook buds sing together
But he is come in cold-as-workhouse weather
Poor as a Salford child.

MEDITATION AFTER READING TRAHERNE

Do not blow the dandelion clock,
Nor dance the dry earth in a borrowed mask,
Your pouted lips and imitative feet
Will not ripen the seed of the wheat,
Will not inveigle the innocent whistle
Of the finch or gnome in the carline-thistle.
Folly it is for a man to ask
Of the dragon-fly and of the summer
Where is Beelzebub, Where is Mince Pie,
Where is Bold Slasher?

The snow-flake dissolves on the palm of the hand:
And life is a torment we cannot understand.

LANDMARK

(For Desiderius Erasmus: 1467–1536)

Boys mount the mossy branches of this tree,
And lean like figure-heads into the gulf,
Sprawl recklessly upon the vapid sky,
Or hang by ankles mocking the dim turf.

But down below this dizzy growth of sap,
Notice the skulls and clavicles approach,
Bearing the hangman's noose, the blades to chop,
Saws to dissever every limb and branch.

Boys who have poised as birds, and laughed like leaves,
We warn you, roots will bleed, and grass grow sour;
Although this tree drew vigour from your veins,
Its impotence will vitiate your power.

At the moment John Short is the Warden of a working man's college at Letchworth, and his work has become even more self-contained in consequence of the war, as is shown by his most recent *Lament for Dido* and translation *Que J'aime ces Forêts* from François de Maynard.

Herbert Howarth and John Short are undoubtedly the most outstanding of Oxford's elder generation of poets, but while John Short was the better poet, Herbert Howarth

remained the greater influence. And in the wake of Howarth, some pacifically following, others resentful, several quite opposed, followed S. A. Mason, Denzil Dunnett, Alec Darbyshire, Hector Thomson, Philip John Stead, Andrew Murray, Margaret Stanley-Wrench, and a host of others. This coterie kept more or less together until Howarth lost his faith in Auden and went wholeheartedly into Mass Observation. Not so many followed Howarth from Parnassus to Blackpool, and the Tom Harrisson article in what was to be the last number of *Light and Dark*, attacking "The Year's Poetry," "New Writing," "Letters from Iceland," and the Auden Double Number of *New Verse* excited bitter protest and seemed to prove to the Oxford intellectual that he could not serve two gods. Howarth, of course, could and did; but he had to go back to the eighteenth century to do it and bring back Pope to his rescue.

Howarth once declared in *The Cherwell* that he considered S. A. Mason to be Oxford's best poet; but this, I think, was a gesture in order not to offend any of his personal friends by giving that distinction to one that could diplomatically only be offered to all. Certainly Mason's *After the Revolution* treats in a "Boy's Own Paper" fashion this feeling in Oxford of the coming horror of wars and rebellions.

> It was a journey that brought death to many of us.
> André was ripped up by a madman in the Todesstrasze,
> Ludwig poisoned by a woman in an East End tenement.
> Then there was the mob in the piazza,
> Faces upturned like white loathsome flowers,
> And Gunnar sagging suddenly over the balcony.

However, Mason never quite lived up to the promise of his three poems in *New Oxford Poetry*. His later *The Lovers*, *Fair Wages*, and *Bleistein to Calvary* seem to show a technique far less sincere.

Of Howarth's personal friends one of the closest was Denzil Dunnett; but Dunnett even more than Howarth showed clearly that it was in the realm of criticism that his real power lay. His poems are inclined to be rather stolid

and laboured; though he crowds into them odd little originalities like Jack Horner selecting plums from the pie. For instance

> The gentle snowfall of a paralysis

from *When in Disgrace*, or

> the earth unlocks with birds—the house of cards
> falls in whirls upwards, gravity in retreat,

from *Fancy is Blind*. There is the usual dissatisfaction and hatred of things, the idea of a remorseless fate creeping on and destroying. This is characterized in *An Invitation*:

> Mine is the maddening wireless through the wall.
> I gave you the infection of your cold.
> It was I tripped you running for the bus,
> And I too drove the car that ran you over.
> I am the captain of industry scheming the war
> Where you'll be gassed, and I'm the communist
> Who'll dynamite the cathedrals and steal your silver.

But *Hospital Morning* is perhaps his best poem. Dunnett, a Fabian, almost looked forward to the inevitable conflict. Wickedness and injustice would of necessity become less, the good would endure. Thus in Dunnett's eyes (*The Persecutor Speaks*) it is always:

> our army is melting, is melting in the snow.

A poet similar though inferior to Dunnett is Alec Darbyshire. But Darbyshire seems to lack any feeling for words and rhythm. He has something to say, but is unbeautiful and at times dull. A Marxist, he makes his poetry the expression of his philosophy. He seems to be entirely self-centred, hating everybody. In *Harrow*

> Patent medicines arouse the stupid;
> The clockwork morning trains
> Take back the spoonfed to the end:—

and so on.

A third who should be added to this group is Hector Thomson. He is Howarth run mad, but is frequently very readable. He has written a number of fantastic *Confessions* containing such verses as these:

> There are fishes in the Caribbean Sea
> To some a sapient epitome
> I shouldn't stare at them too long
> God gives the battle to the strong.

His *Tischbein* is full of innumerable mice making love on the stairs, lizards, little worms,

> And hippos with unruly hair
> And cheese-mites from the Camembert.

Tischbein however leaves this inspired gathering to look for a Christmas tree in the woods, but instead :

> He saw a wooden coffin with rope handles.

Yet frequently Thomson achieves a notable expression as in *Sentimental Piece* and its closing lines :

> The sound of motor lorries and the bees
> Furry and laden as her half-closed eyes.

On the whole it seems to me that these last three poets show between them both the faults and virtues of the Howarth period.

Two of the better poets of this time were Philip John Stead and Andrew Murray. Stead's writing has a charming feminine touch. His view of the future is the same disillusioned view of the rest, but he is quietly resigned to it. This resignation is the source of much of his love poetry. In *Disinheritance* for instance he says :

> My son and I go to the grave together :
> With me there perishes another age
> That shall not live to love the new March weather,
> Nor work nor eat and drink nor shake with rage.

Occasionally he takes a cue from Howarth, as in *Postcard* :

> Loaded with grinning heads, the pleasure steamer
> Lists to the quay, its paddles churning foam.
>
> The wind howls round the empty bandstand's base,
> Smacking the bottoms of green canvas chairs :
>
> The boarding house's squares of yellow light
> Blink one by one and leave a windy street :
>
> We're staying here, old man, we think it's grand ;
> To-day we sailed, and listened to the band.

Similar feelings lead him to look at events. *Easter* 1937 describes

> over the wreckage of expensive rifle
> the huddle of cheap man.

The following (*Bomber*), perhaps one of his most powerful poems in this manner, was written in the interval between Munich and the Rape of Poland.

Oh, lovelier than the cutie
With ash and golden hair,
And swifter than the swallow
Wavering through the air,

Oh, stronger than Spring's impulse
Shivering through the tree,
And deeper than the droning
Of any simple bee,

Oh, darker in his purpose
Than Winter's bitter breath
Is the aluminium angel
Who spreads his wings of death.

Though Philip John Stead and Andrew Murray had poetically a lot in common, outwardly this was not obvious. Socially Stead lived at the centre, Murray on the outskirts. Stead liked to eat like a Lucullus; Murray lunched off bread and cheese. Stead in conversation was witty, droll, and satirical; Murray was deep and sincere. Stead was a poseur. Coming back from an examination he would clothe himself from head to foot in black silk, draw the blinds, and lie languidly on the sofa. He went to the first night of the O.U.D.S. *Duchess of Malfi* in an opera cloak, and remarked in the interval that they were going to strangle the wrong person; Antonio deserved it more. Murray on the other hand, with a slight stammer, was simple almost to the point of affectation; he never said anything without reflection, and he said what he felt. Stead's great interest was the theatre (as a dramatic critic he excelled); Murray spent his long vacation hay-making with farm labourers.

Murray's poetry in consequence is less charming than Stead's, but it has the same subjects and is delivered with more power. He has a fine control of modern technique which he uses with a swing. The first verse of *Poem* has a quite flawless lilt unknown to Stead:

Life blossoms for this person at regular intervals
In the usual forgivable sentimental way.
At noon and at half past five he will dance to the clock
And sorrow dissolves in the gentle winter day
For his love passes by in her special personal colours
Of silver and purple and soft november grey.

Much of Murray's poetry expresses the same disillusioned fear of the future, a future which the Oxford poet will attack but will never face. So in the poem *Advent*,

> Christmas comes very slowly
> Like Uncle into the nursery,
> But what is that behind his back
> And why has he stopped smiling ?

Armageddon, a savage roaring poem, well expresses the wild resentment of the intellectual faced by war :

> I'll walk and talk destruction on the town
> And chimneys tumble down
> My rumbling laugh will shake the swinging steeples
> And all the people
> Go quiet like mice and on the sudden scamper.
> They'll all go under
> and scarcely leave a ripple,
> The scout and the priest, the police and the innocent camper,
> Before I've finished with my tidal-wave and thunder.
>
> I'll meet the wrestling-man outside his villa
> For I'm a champion killer
> I'll have his wife and no heroic brother
> Say nay when I do in his mother
> And the milk'll stand long at the door, my dear,
> Before baby is fed,
> or the milkman or another
> Calls for an order for I give orders here
> And regret to report the whistling milkman is dead.
>
> And none be left but the wind and the waving tree
> Ashes and the ghost of me
> Where Europe so long made history and money
> When days were sunny
> No culture on this continent I find
> (Though rumour comes
> insurgent from far frontier) nor any
> London to print in late editions how mankind
> Begins again with the thumping of savage drums.

At other times, however, Murray thinks that in the end the world may be reformed. Statesmen's signatures do not matter, nor is there any permanence in the " crimson orator in creative revel " ; the human will of the few to do good, to bring back order and justice is indomitable. So in *Poem*

> To vertical shall suffering strive nor to-morrow cry halt.

Oxford's only woman poet remains to complete this account of the Howarth period. Margaret Stanley-Wrench was pleasing in character and appearance, more productive than most poets, and she wrote with a high level of competence. But she had the misfortune to win the Newdigate Prize, which—whatever may be thought of this accolade in the outside world—is in Oxford almost a taboo, a kind of spiritual death. Briefly the facts are these :

1. Oxford since the last war has produced several well-known or even famous poets, not one of whom won the Newdigate.
2. Oxford since the last war has also produced twenty-one Newdigate winners, not one of whom has become well-known or celebrated. (That is, as a poet.)

Miss Stanley-Wrench won the Prize with a poem on *The Man in the Moon*, which was actually about the best Newdigate poem I have read ; but in Oxford it got her the reputation of being a commercial poet, which was harmful. Shortly afterwards she published *News Reel and Other Poems* which was favourably reviewed, though she made the mistake of including as many as seventy-five poems, which meant that the twenty-five or so really good ones were swamped. After writing a few more poems she has lately given up writing poetry almost entirely, preferring to concentrate on the novel and the short story.

Where Stanley-Wrench fails is in her refusal to convey any deep feeling or emotion. Her poems are largely descriptive and therefore in many places a little dull. They only become exciting when her feeling for words makes them so. For instance, her description of the Chinese Moon Goddess :

> And delicately on her fragile feet
> The small moon goddess, almond-eyed and pale
> Walks in the brittle gardens of the moon,
> Beneath her cherry trees, by iris flowers
> White like cold porcelain, by patterned branches
> That fret against her ivory palace walls.

In her book one can make whole lists of poems which are mere pictures and nothing more. *Children in Summer*, *Woman at a Concert*, *The Mower*, *People Waiting*, *Pond*, *Gulls*,

and so on. Many of these pictures are Nature Study and that rather in the florid manner of Victorian Academicians. *Chinese Jugglers* is in a better mould. So is *Not they to Envy* with its portraits of a blind Milton, a deaf Beethoven, and a lame Byron who

> cried out in envy as Italian boys,
> naked and lovely, raced below the rocks
> gold in the noonday sun.

Shortly before turning to prose Miss Stanley-Wrench made a desperate attempt to give to her poetry some awareness of what was going on in the world in which she lived. The poem *News Reel* is itself indicative of this with its pictures of the Spanish War and of people lulled into being oblivious of tragedy by seeing death represented so frequently on the screen. So

> No doctor can raise
> this champion again,
> resurrect the defender
> the saviour of Spain.

But this awakening in Margaret Stanley-Wrench came too late. For the moment she was too lost in herself, the beauty of nature, and her love of horses and young animals, to give it all up for an intangible feeling towards real life. Her best poem of the post News Reel period is the *Regimental March*, at the present time pleasantly significant :

> The drum and fife band is coming up the road ;
> it is pleasant to see the uniforms through the trees,
> the officer in the park, the procession and the crowd,
> the laughing face, and the encouraging cries,
> tradition and the ritual, blood leaping, formal rejoicing.
> And children are running
> to tiptoe and stare
> at the soldiers marching
> neat enough for a war.
> But behind the drum there is another sound,
> and that which is shriller than fifes, cries and the falling
> of the familiar roof, the unmentionable wound,
> the abandoned street, and a child's unheeded calling,
> the despairing backward glance at a world that's lost.
> And the fire that burns
> to warm no hand,
> and the lost child that turns
> and does not understand.

JOHN WALLER.

HOMAGE TO FROST

" The moral is, make a late start to market."

AMONG the notable Americans whose poems have recently appeared in collected editions, none, it can be safely said, is as great as Robert Frost.[1] So famous a poet certainly needs no introduction in the country which first published and recognized him, and where his later books have always been well received. Like Yeats's his greatness has been widely acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic, forcing even the most hostile and opposite cliques[2] momentarily to find themselves in agreement. In a time of shifting values we have had in Frost one of the few modern poets to whom we could wholeheartedly cling.

How, on reading this volume, are we to trace the curve of his development when the curve is scarcely there? It is not that all his books are uniformly good but rather that the essential Frost appears in them all. Even in the first, which is not without feeble echoes and uninspired exercises in the formal lyric, there are one or two complete poems in which he has already found himself: *The Tuft of Flowers*, for example, beginning

> " I went to turn the grass once after one
> Who mowed it in the dew before the sun "

(in which his peculiar subtle cadences are probably first realized), and in *In Hardwood Groves*.

A Boy's Will,—that is the title of his first book, published in London in 1913, when the poet was thirty-eight. " Mr. Frost," wrote Harriet Monroe later, " has never been in a hurry. . . . If he was working at his art during those score of formative years I think he was studying chiefly the rhythms of speech. He felt, no doubt, that if he could satisfy himself that his verse presented the musical essence of his neighbour's talk, all the rest—subject, emotional motive, dexterity of technique—would be added unto him. At any rate he did not publish until his poems had caught those slow and simple, but elusive and difficult, rhythms."

[1] *The Collected Poems of Robert Frost*, Longman's, 1939. 21s.

[2] Frost himself enters the fray taking sides against " sprung-rhythmists " and declaring that there are only two metres in English, " strict iambic and loose iambic." But this is irrelevant in a short consideration of his poetry.

How finely they are actualized in *North of Boston*, which appeared the following year![1] *Mending Wall* and *Blueberries*, *The Code* and *After Apple-Picking*—these and other famous anthology pieces were, probably, never to be surpassed in later years, though often equalled. Dealing with rural matters, and written simply in blank verse—in what for four centuries had been our commonest measure, they were bound to appeal to the English, who never like violent breaks with tradition. But *North of Boston* was far from being a repetition. If Frost was not a revolutionary like Pound and the Imagists and Carl Sandburg who were getting into print about the same time, or like Eliot who appeared a year or two later, he was not on the other hand a conventional Georgian pastoralist. As Babette Deutsch has remarked,

> "One cannot confuse this twinkling American who talks of 'the trial by market everything must come to', with such men as William Davies, standing and staring happily at sheep and cows, or Rupert Brooke, longing for honey with his tea on a lawn at Grantchester. He does not see the country with the eyes of the carefree vagabond or the city-sick romantic, who finds it as charming and refreshing as a new mistress. He has for it rather the understanding, slightly quizzical look a man gives to the wife of his bosom. He is learned in the ways of the land as no amateur of roads or gardens can ever be, and, for all his unworldliness, has a knowledge of men which permits him to salt his verse with humorous observation."

English poets for two hundred years had been writing about their countryside; what was left of it had mostly become tamed and so had nearly all the writers; scarcely anyone could say anything fresh about it in a fresh manner. Our nature poetry had been great and marvellous; now it seldom was more than small and pretty. In a preface to Frost's *Selected Poems* Auden has said that the term nature poetry could never have been used before the Industrial Revolution, "i.e. before the social life of the town and that of the country had become so specialized and so divergent in their interests as to seem separate fields of experience." There are, he observes, two kinds of nature poets: the man who lives in the country because he has to,

[1] Written and published in England. He returned home in 1915 and American editions of both books appeared the same year.

because he works there, and the sensitive who lives there because he can afford to, and because he dislikes the country, i.e. Wordsworth and Lawrence (the second type presumably including townees, who, though only visiting it, would live there if they could). Of the former type—of the small farmer—" Frost is almost the only representative." There is Burns, of course, and some young Americans could be mentioned, but these are exceptions proving the rule. The difference between the New Hampshire farmer talking shop and our James Thompsons and company dabbling in similar themes, between Frost writing about birches and the wood-pile and Shelley and Keats describing woods, is almost as great as that between a bona-fide milkmaid doing her job and Marie Antoinette and her ladies-in-waiting delicately leading cows at the end of a long string during a visit of amusement to the farmyard. Take, for example, *A Blue Ribbon at Amesbury* (one of his later poems):

" Such a fine pullet ought to go
All coiffured to a winter show,
And be exhibited and win.
The answer is this one has been—

" And come with all her honors home.
Her golden leg, her coral comb,
Her fluff of plumage white as chalk,
Her style, were all the fancy's talk.

" It seems as if you must have heard,
She scored an almost perfect bird.
In her we make ourselves acquainted
With one a Sewell might have painted.

. . . . . .

" 'Tis ritual with her to lay
The full six days, then rest a day;
At which rate barring broodiness
She well may score an egg success.

" The gatherer can always tell
Her well-turned egg's brown sturdy shell,
As safe a vehicle of seed
As is vouchsafed to feathered breed.

" No human spectre at the feast
Can scant or hurry her the least
She takes her time to take her fill.
She whets a sleepy sated bill.

" She gropes across the pen alone
To peck herself a precious stone.
She waters at the patent fount.
And so to roost, the last to mount.

" The roost is her extent of flight.
Yet once she rises to the height,
She shoulders with a wing so strong
She makes the whole flock move along.

" The night is setting in to blow.
It scours the windowpane with snow
But barely gets from them or her
For comment a complacent chirr.

" The lowly pen is yet a hold
Against the dark and wind and cold
To give a prospect to a plan
And warrant prudence in a man."

Now it is no small triumph to produce a good poem on such a theme,—to combine both enthusiasm and first-hand knowledge, on the one hand avoiding romantic vapourizing and on the other mere dullness. It is probable indeed that many extreme romantics would have rejected poultry altogether as being a subject unfit for poetry, or at least made the *egg* rather than the *leg* golden. The conception of what could legitimately be the raw material of poets had been so narrowed that there remained very little to write about: the muse's caravan was confined to a narrow-guage tram-track; the poetic licence was badly in need of renewal. Browning, to be sure, had written largely as a realist, and so had Hardy and Kipling, but it was left to men like Masefield and Frost, Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters (three of them American) to provide the real impetus for the renascence of realism. " They found their subject-matter not in a romanticized past, but in the harsh exciting present: the farms and the slums, the factory-hand

and the hobo, the shop-girl and the boarding-house keeper,"[1] the drunkard and the fornicator, the tough sailor and the kitchen drudge with a mad uncle locked up in the barn. It is above all in this respect, in writing of ordinary things in an interesting objective manner, that these poets were modern—vital forces in a poetry that would, and did, hold the man in the street.

Of the manner there is more to be said than at first might appear.

" ' Willis, bring Anne back with you when you come.
Yes. Thanks for caring. Don't mind Will, he's savage.
He thinks you ought to pay me for my flowers.
You don't know what I mean about the flowers.
Don't stop to try to now. You'll miss your train.
Good-bye.' He flung his arms around his face."

" You know Paul could do wonders. Everyone's
Heard how he thrashed the horses on a load
That wouldn't budge until they simply stretched
Their rawhide harness from the load to camp.
Paul told the boss the load would be all right,
' The sun will bring your load in '—and it did—
By shrinking the rawhide to natural length."

" They had just given themselves a little twist
And turned from looking up and being kissed
To looking down and yet not being sad,
When came Square Hale with Let's see what we had ;
And two was all he counted (one he missed)
And two for a beginning wasn't bad."

Such dry, matter-of-fact, prosaic passages (excerpts from longer poems) are typical of Frost's method. It is the sort of English that Wordsworth had advocated in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*—the sort that would have pleased the Royal Society who in the 1660's " exacted from their members a close, naked, natural way of speaking, positive expressions, clear sense, a native easiness, bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness as they can, and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that of Wits or Scholars." It is doubtful if any poet of Frost's stature writing in English has em-

[1] Babette Deutsch.

ployed so neutral a style. Using simple, comparatively colourless words, very few images, and nearly always the commonest iambic measures, he has built up poems that are significant, wise and perfect in their kind. Or, rather, they have grown: he has said so himself in the Preface to this edition. And just because they are natural organic growths his poems can rarely be lopped, can rarely be quoted except in their entirety. One of the best critiques on Frost that I have read is an analysis by Edwin Muir of a single poem, *The Axe-Helve*, showing its development on lines utterly unforeseen.

They are poems which almost never are static. Something is always quietly happening although we may scarcely sense the movement: there is a beginning, a middle and an end. It is perhaps because of their completeness that they appear not to need any but the sparsest imagery; though in what may prove his most enduring pieces the particulars are often so actualized as to become symbols (I am thinking especially of the recurrence of "sleep" and "snow"), or the whole poem may be overtly symbolical (as in *Tree at My Window* or *On a Tree Fallen Across the Road*).

We "must bring . . . the maturest,/ The longest-saved-up, raciest, localest/ We have strength of reserve in us to bring"; and he brings it. Concentrating on his small corner of America, this farmer of New Hampshire and Vermont "gets the United States stated"—what is best in it—more successfully than many a writer aiming at greater geographical inclusiveness. Providing a useful bridge between nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and between English-speaking peoples in both continents, and cutting across cliques and classes, he makes a fair bid for universality. Interested in everyday things and the common run of people; human though never sentimental; intelligent though never difficult, frigid or merely clever; Frost like Edgar Lee Masters (who, however, has failed to maintain his earlier standard) stands for a sane, simple, healthy attitude towards poetry. Unimpassioned, with the slow steady pulse of a genuine countryman's, his poems have

the naturalness and the limitations of their kind. What that kind is would need further elucidation: it includes much of Virgil, something of Crabbe, Chaucer, Langland, certain Elizabethans (Heywood and Ford perhaps) and others. More could be said of the whimsical humour and the ironic detachment that give his genre poems much of their charm; his homely aphorisms might be instanced ("Its knowing what to do with things that counts"; "To err is human, not to, animal"; "'Home is the place where, when you have to go there,/ They have to take you in'. 'I should have called it/ Something you somehow haven't to deserve'"); and I could speak of his large literary following—not to mention those who, though never having read him, have yet been reckoned among his disciples.

But no one need approach Robert Frost with a heavy critical apparatus. Rather do we turn (and return) to him spontaneously as to a sane, natural, very human person. And we find we are held, and afterwards that he has brought out all that is best in us—all that is most likable.

TERENCE HEYWOOD.

IF DEATH SHALL STRIKE

IF Death shall strike at me in some torn street
Before I see which way his knife may turn,
Whether in pain or dying unconcern.
I lie so suddenly beneath his feet,
I shall remember all that has been sweet;
The mercy of the mountains and the sea,
All the dumb living things so dear to me,
And love that has been mine rich and complete.

Then shall I cry to Death, "Strike if you will,
My life is nothing and my soul is less;
'Tis not of these I think in my distress
But that so soon, so soon you must fulfil
The promise of impermanence, and kill
For me, for ever, all this loveliness."

P. E. C. DUCE.

IN A CITY CHURCH

DUST whirls about the City, horses stamp;
The whetted wind is blinding.
In each man's eyes I see a little lamp,
Seeking and never finding;

While in a painted window branched with lead,
Transparent to the street,
The City of God still glows, unravished,
With starry pennons streaming at her head,
And curled waves at her feet!

Outside, they speed and jostle—poor, lost clan,
Harried and lean and white;
Clerk, typist, lorry-driver—Everyman
God meant to be a knight.

O mystic Rose behind the frozen glass,
They pluck you not. O pity
That these her children do not seek to pass
Home, home into their City!

Yet, when the anvils shone, and sparks were flying,
And armourers cried, Come!
What swords were forged for them at Time's beginning
To what a roll of drum!

MARY ADAIR MACDONALD.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN: A SONNET TO ANTHEA

MOST cruel world where Love is crucified,
Led on through living death in every hour;
Most cruel world where Beauty, satisfied
To be herself, is driven from her bower—
When will you turn your face toward the sun?
When will you welcome Beauty and be kind?
When let Love live in peace and life be one
That those who seek may ever surely find?

My heart is wounded sore and full of pain
Because they hate you so, my Love, my Lord:
Beauty is fled, or else this scalding rain
Of tears doth blind me where I once adored:
Why do you kill my Love, slay Beauty's soul,
The Just One's word will come; His thunders roll.

AIDAN CLARKE.

ATTACK BY NIGHT

WHEN they pour in, driving sleep before them,
The merciless fears, coursing through the shuddering soul,
Shrieking, and trampling, and laughing,
Laughing in a thousand cruel tones,
Shattering every foothold,
Burning shelter to ashes,
Snatching straw from drowning hands,
Wafting in on hot whispers
Ghosts of faces, hands, voices—
The comfortless eyes of the friend failer,
The withered fingers of the false hand grasper,
The hollow word of the lover turned traitor :—
When they march in, in the sleepless hours,
Breathing disaster and disillusionment,
Proving incontrovertibly
Beauty, truth, love, to be lies and obscenities,
Then, as they make ready the triumph cry,
Then, with the strength of the dying,
Hold them back from the final advance,
And call aloud, call from the dim past
All the former fears, the fears of childhood,
Long vanquished, brought into obedient slavery :
Call up the night of terror, when the infant
Watched on the window the clutching witch hand—
Shown by day as the budding twig of the lilac :
Call up the day of desolation, when the babe
Screamed by reason of the mother's desertion
For ever, for ever—the eternal departure
Revealed at evening as a short day's absence :
Call up the hour of horror, when the tale of dread
And loss, read aloud from the story book,
Filled the child's heart with anguish and impotent pity—
Known but a few years later as ill-written fiction.
Call up these slaves, mercenaries, and confront
Those fears which pour in, driving sleep before them,
Storming the citadel of the adult soul,
And let these shoulder the conflict ;
Let them show those merciless fears as their kinsmen,
Their spears of grass, their cannon-balls bubbles,
And press them too into the ranks of the conquered,
Arm them also for future service.
To fight fresh battles for the reclaimed soul
Against the next detachment of assailants. RHODA E. CUTBUSH.

IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

WITH a child's arrogance,
In the heart's wild longing, one sought
To trap the spirit of beauty,
The substance of beauty so rare;
O careless and eager the hands that wrought
With a net of dreams for the snare:
But dream—the frail stuff of dream in the moonshine—
Was all that he caught.
He that gives shadow, gets shadow—
A phantom, a figment, a bubble of air.

He loved, at last; but royally, wholly;
And beauty leaned near
Where he knelt to her lowly
To offer his heart, all his dreams, all his songs,
All his treasure of rapture, his dear
Unspoken shy tender desiring.
He beheld her—most clear,
But strange and remote, as through water—
Through waves that wash greenly, swing slowly—
As drowned liles under a mere.
He that sees beauty through self, sees distorted;
And greatest heart solely
Sustaineth the bondage of spirit, unflawed and austere.

He kneels again, heart humble and broken,
In a dark world and bare;
But beauty has shown him her secret, eternal altar,
That he may worship her there.
Only the humble heart can know the compassion of beauty,
And he that has tasted despair. DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

At a meeting of the Civil Service Gaelic Society, Dublin, Mr. Gerard Murphy, M.A., lecturer in English in University College, compared some Irish literature with English. Irish poetry, he said, was nearer to the heart of the man in the street than was any other poetry in Europe to-day. There is more music and more beauty in the Irish poem than there is in the English. Every Irish poet is gifted by nature with mind and material which render him dear to the heart of the people among whom he lives. Irish poetry is described by a great Irishman as "beautiful, precise, lively and natural," with a margin of sound and sense and music. If the poor, uneducated Irishman from the Gaeltacht can produce such wonderful poetry, what would the educated man not be able to produce.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXXIII

Professor Johnson, who hails from the Syracuse University, sends us a distinguished analysis of poetry :

> " Poetry may be thought of as the flowering of patience. And this is why it is so intimately connected with genius. On its technical side the writing of poetry is less the having something to say than of an achieved temporal pattern in the mind-watchful. We lure poetry. Many a living clever mind has very many more ideas than Shakespeare ever had ; but that, obviously, is not the point. The author of *The Roadmender* says pertinently ' I know too much, not too little : it is realization that I need.' Yeats remarked in this connection : ' With us nothing has time to gather meaning.'
>
> " Now Poetry does not acquiesce in this. Loving moss more than macadam, she seems to be all the while intent on creating some infinitely fine soil, dew-attractive, whence the fleur-de-lis of thought may spring. She counts on a dew that we call inspiration ; counts on a mysterious co-operating Gardener like unto that presence the ancient poet conceived when he wrote of the Lord God walking in the garden—Man's garden—in the cool of the day ; one of the loveliest poems, and descriptions of the poetic function, ever written."

Each poem in this engaging collection, *When Thou Hast Shut Thy Door* (Falmouth Publishing House), is prefaced by prose, keenly evaluating man and nature. We will enjoy " Autumn "—

> The harvest moon on the cowl-shaped roof
> Shines like a lamp on a monk at prayer ;
> So wrapt is the house one could well believe
> That time were suspended there.
>
> In the garden the knell of summer is tolled
> Periodically in the sound
> Of a large pear slithering through its leaves
> With a low thud to the ground.
>
> Above in their purple fields the stars let fall
> Nor sound nor shadow marking the hours ;
> Over the far-scattering of leaf and seed
> Bloom on these fadeless flowers ;
>
> Fronting like seraphim the fearful night,
> Telling us in the time of groping
> Of Light more wondrous still, that surely
> With human darkness is coping.

Let us measure the poetic capacity of Professor Johnson in the following sonnet, " The Buoys "—

When I recall the measure of despair
That made this one heart heavy as a stone,
And think on the immeasurable care
Of countless hearts more laden than my own,
I marvel that this coracle of clay,
This little ship the Earth, untrimmed, unbuoyed,
Has never fallen from the starry way
Sunk of its weight of hearts into the void.

It must be very true what faith believes
Of a heart divine unlading human fear.
I think I was forgetting (now the leaves
Are underfoot and dank November's here)
How with the blossoms we are borne above,
And how innumerably-winged is love.

" Epitaph," with which this volume closes is fine :

Here lies a man unnoted of the world,
The unabiding world of greed and noise.
He heard a mocking in the bells of fame,
And held all war the fidgeting of boys.

Not fearing peace, he feared not anything ;
Loving all life, he scarce had need of prayer.
He knew there was not anywhere to go
From out God's heart ; he was, and he is, There.

In Wild Mad Acres (Falmouth Press), Loton Rogers Pitts has been drawn to describe the rural world, its people and its philosophy. He writes of poetry :

" Poetry is omnipresent. I picture it to be a diaphragm organically existent between the commonplace and the sublime. It is vitally essential to both. The life of poetry depends upon the counterbalance of each. It is neither wholly ethereal, nor wholly earthbound. Its pulse knows the tenored roots of one ; the dreams and beauty of the other. Literary and social backgrounds, time and events may qualify it, but the lyric quality of poetry which is its lifeblood is not hampered by form. Beyond us, never, for in element it is a part of each and everyone. The sad truth is —we do not all become a part of it. That is my reaction to poetry. I do not dare define it for it is not at home in a cage of words."

With an abiding fondness he makes *The Farm* tell its story :

No one in all these years, until you came,
Sat down and talked and asked me to relate
My story :
So long it's been entombed, I thought
No generation would produce one tuned

To what is native in my heart and soul.
Oh, I am glad the seed gave life to you;
I shall not call you poet, philosopher,
No, and yet you may encompass both.
Perhaps you may be neither, time will tell,
Though time is but a factor of the will.

I've been your family's for many years,
A lot of brooding acres in the sun,
And rain, ice, snow and storm. But it's been ours:
A friendship that began long years ago
When I was woods and not a clearing stood;
Faith, not a house, nor field, not anything
But woods around a brook that you know well,
The brook that you sailed boats on, fished, and dammed
To make it turn the mill wheels that you made
Rustic as they were.

And thus the reader journeys with this country squire over his acres through several pages of glowing and authentic description.

To give an example of this poet's dramatic capacity, in a few lines, to give us his characters: "Jim's Second Wife"—

I married Jim three years after the death
Of his first wife and little son. Jim worked
As if work were the answer to a need
That gnawed his heart.
That row of apple trees
His first wife planted with her lovely hands
Was apple sauce, and pies, and work for me.
We raised five children, lost two other ones,
Had seven in all.
I never knew Jim's love
Like that his first wife knew.
Ours was a love
Of two strong horses pulling a plow to break
New ground and make a furrow straight enough
For growing children's feet to follow down.

I loved his brother, John, but held it deep
Within my heart. I'd made my bed with Jim.

This interesting collection ends with another poem concerning the farm, entitled "To Old Farm":

Wide Friendly Acres, I have lived with you;
Heart open, free, we have dared all, shared all,
Touched stars we love, known sun and joy of life,
Yet turned our faces to the sting of rain
And snow, cussed with the thunder of our hate

Things seen, unseen; then, with the turn of the storm,
Reached out to find each other's hand and stood
To look at sky and speak about the weather.
* * * * *
So shall I go; so shall I come again.
For you and I have grown deep roots that know
Fertility is not so much manure
Thrown out upon a field and furrowed in;
But is the constancy of all that is
Rotating through eternity . . . which makes
The world, an anchorage of dreams and fact, while deep
Beneath its surface, strange as life and sleep,
Beats rhythmically the pulse whose parallel is ours.

The Christmas Tree and Other Poems, by Alexander Blair Thaw (Ferris Printing Co., New York), brings to the reader interesting places and people. We learn that most of the poems were published in London in 1909 and were selected by the beloved poet, Alice Meynell. Mr. Thaw was born in Pittsburgh, December 13th, 1860, graduated from the Harvard Medical School and worked among the poor children of New York with Dr. Holt. His death in 1937 brought to his many admirers a sense of great loss. In turning the pages, I stop to read first a poem of length, and because so recently, as giver of the Keats-Shelley Memorial prize, many poems celebrating these English poets have been sent me, one believes that should this poem have been sent to the contest it would have won. We give the first stanza: "To Shelley and Keats in Rome"—

Twin sons of sky and earth, like that great pair
Who last were seen of mortals, watering
Their steeds, at dawn, by Vesta's temple stair!
Three columns watch by Rome's once sacred spring,
Where still their altar stands, inviolate
Amidst a world of ruin; where mosses cling,
And those sweet ferns which now we consecrate
Unto the name of Venus, virgin, pure;
On whose high worship, still, your twin souls wait!

It is a curious coincidence that the winning poem of the contest, written by Willis Ogden Warren, was a sonnet entitled "To Poetry," and there is a sonnet sequence in Mr. Thaw's collection so entitled:

The love I bore all these to thee I bring,
And with Love's harvest in my hand I wait,
Content to kneel beside the outer gate
Of the dear shrine. And if thou, opening
The door, shouldst bid me follow thee, and fling
My little handful in,—or soon or late,—
Lo! it is thine. To thee is consecrate
The last grain gleaned of love's own garnering.

Oh ! take the gift, and open wide the door :
Pierce me with all the magic of thine eyes,
And in mine ears thy deathless music pour !
When this my heart within thy bosom lies,
But one small seed is added to thy store ;—
And thy rose-garden fills the farthest skies !

The loving admiration this poet had for his wife is expressed in a number of sonnets. We give one of them : " To F.T." :

How many blessed days and years have passed
Since first I caught that gleam of living light,
Which leads me on ! And while the shadows, cast
By this our earth, turning the day to night,
Still measure out the years, lo, holding fast,
Hand clasped in hand, together in this bright,
New day's swift coming dawn, how clear at last
The whole great vision glows before our sight.

And though, beneath the sun, year after year,
We might not face, in the high noon of day,
The burning light that binds our hearts together,
Yet well I know, as the dawn shadows clear,
How constantly, by that dear, unseen tether
Which holds us fast, you helped me on the way.

Francis Gallagher, in *With Wings and Engine* (Henry Harrison, New York), is convinced that " poetry, by its vigorous survival in this chaotic and mechanistic age, is one of the finest evidences of the invincible spirit of the higher man." He continues : " I am convinced that it will continue to provide much rich and flowing speech for the stammering and dumb. After experimenting with several forms of literature I chose it because I seemed to have a tendency to tell my story and express my emotion in much fewer words than prose fiction, for example, might entail. It has been the only form of literary expression in which I have consistently felt completely at home. And I, as a poor man, have probably missed much other opportunity in life while serving such a jealous mistress as Euterpe."

It seems to this reviewer that you will enjoy " Radio Soloist," bespeaking a regular fellow :

You tell me I sing fervidly and please
  Both critics and the public. I am awed
By this ; at them I've never aimed one piece.
In confidence I tell you this. I sing
  As over a private wire into my home.
The wife I love has given that fervid ring
  To cords once chill almost as a catacomb.
Fame comes to many a once private poem.

I sing to Helen—she alone is mine—
But they are welcome who may tap our line.

And now for " Lilac Prince "—

We Bostonians are privileged to browze
Through a comprehensive open gallery of lilacs
In the Arboretum around the middle of May—
Some as small as a bachelor button
And some as large as a petite bouquet,
And every one a belle of the fields, be she in white or red or blue or purple. * * *

I must mentally photograph you in technicolour and great detail,
That you may be seen in the royal dress in which you gave me this audience
When your trees and shrubs are armoured from head to foot in ice.
That picture must not fade, at least till May, the creative florist, opens a store once more on this fertile site.

As I Day Dream, Avis de Leon's first book (Uranian Press, New York), carries with it the promise of good things to come, not that this collection is not noteworthy, it is delightful. In the preface, Miss Iris Vorel says very well :

" She has chosen blank verse as the vehicle for her expression, written with adroit spontaneity, as an artist holds the multiple moods of Nature *a premier coup* with a brush both vivid and delicate. Variety and brevity spice her lines, and her rich, colourful imagination blossoms into graceful hyperboles of thought with the lovely flowering of her mind."

The following short poem, " Would You ? " shows the quick thought, followed by expressive words :

If you loved me
Would you follow
Unto the world's end ?
Over seas
And trackless wastes,
Through joy and sadness,
Never failing me ?
Completely satisfied
No matter where,
As long as I were near ?
Would this be your way ?
It could be mine.

And again, youth and Miss de Leon's gift is manifest in " Rendezvous " :

The champagne bubbles in my glass arise,
My effervescent spirits do likewise.
This place, it is so cosy—just for two.

Could I have been mistaken about you ?
I think I'll have another drink, in case—
I wonder if we could have mixed our dates ?
" Oh, there you are, my love, at last ! "
" Please waiter, bring another glass."

Your eyes, they tell me charming lies
That stir my soul with longing sighs.
And here, my dear, a toast to you :
" Long life, a love affair—or two ! "
Could I win—possibly, first place ?
Or are there now too many in the race ?
Well, I shall try my very best.
" Please, drink more, darling, not less.
You are my only love confessed ! "

This blithe poet has a sorrowful moment in " Desolation " ;

The glow has gone
Leaving the taste of ashes,
Dry dust in the mouth of time.
Nothing left to me
But loneliness,
Complete banishment of joy.
I languish by the way
Immersed in sadness.
Existing for what ?—why ?
Life passes me by.

Miss de Leon is of Scotch-English origin and her ancestors settled in America over 100 years ago.

I wish to call the attention of all our readers to *Muse Anthology*, setting forth the great genius of Edgar Allen Poe through expressions concerning him from the best writers in America to-day. Carlyle Straub, as well as being the publisher of this beautiful volume, is responsible for the format. It is an achievement in book production. We find the technical consultant of this volume is Dr. Mary Brent Whiteside, whose poetry has attained a foremost position in the lists of to-day. There are some five editors associated in this labour of love.

The volume is divided into seven separate books—Book I, contains prose essays and poems in tribute to Edgar Allen Poe ; Book II, Poe's " The Poetic Principle and Complete Poetic Works " ; Book III, lyrics by contemporary poets of Great Britain and America ; Book IV, sonnets by contemporary poets ; Book V, quatrains and verse in lighter vein by contemporary poets ; Book VI, Vers Libre by contemporary poets ; Book VII, addenda ; a section which presents the authentic history of Poe's most noted poem " The Raven."

This treasure book brings us face to face with the importance of poetry, the practice of it, the purpose of it and the peril of it. The practice, since it calls for the most exacting discipline of the mind and heart—the purpose of it, since it may sway many to the Right—and the peril of it, since it may equally misapplied lead to the Wrong.

Dr. Whiteside has generously sent us the following :

The comprehensive and beautiful Edgar Allen Poe Memorial Anthology may be called a creation rather than a mere publication, for it represents the fulfilment of a long cherished dream.

It is well known that the art of Poe was recognized and acclaimed by European critics before it attained any wide degree of attention on the part of his own countrymen. This may be partially explained by the fact that chronologically Poe was too close to the group of Transcendentalists, with whom he had nothing in common. So far as the United States was concerned, he had the misfortune to be born in the wrong century.

Yet, while his personal life was one of the outstanding tragedies of all literature ; a story so poignant that a sympathetic biographer can scarcely approach its portrayal without tears in his heart, the subsequent history of the Poe manuscripts and letters promises to become an enduring and romantic legend.

It is only with the publication of *Muse*, that the complete story of the discovery of the original manuscript of *The Raven* has been given to the public. For many years it was sought in vain by collectors, who despairingly concluded that it had shared the customary fate of casual newspaper contributions, and perished ingloriously with the other contents of the office waste basket.

It may be claimed that no other poem short of epic length in all the literature of the world, has had so amazing a history and produced so much controversy as *The Raven*. Nine years ago a holograph copy of the lines turned up in Philadelphia, and proved so great a sensation among collectors that it received considerable attention on the part of the press. Again the general public became aware of the lengthening flight of that " bird of evil omen," although it remained for a minority only to be aware that four collectors had committed suicide in their frenzied quest for Poe items.

But a greater sensation was to follow, since it concerns the recent discovery in far away Sydney, Australia, of a copy of *The Raven* in the poet's own exquisite script, which actually antedates the Philadelphia text, since it corresponds verbatim with the lines of the poem as it was first published in *The New York Evening Mirror*, of January 29th, 1845. Poe, starving, had sold his lines for $10.00. Now, the present owner of this earliest copy in the poet's writing, has insured his treasure for a half million.

To shorten a long story, a press foreman named Alexander McKelly, emerges from obscurity to claim increasing attention with the passing

years, for it was his discerning hand that rescued the script and handed it down as a rare legacy to the Australian descendant, who is now its owner. And it is this rare holograph text which we have been privileged by special arrangement to reproduce in full, in the Addenda of *Muse*.

The production of this volume has been a labour of love, and it may reasonably be claimed that no other individual poet has been the recipient of a literary Memorial on so extensive a scale. We can only hope that it may fulfil its destiny as a living tribute to the unique and living art of America's greatest poet.

Among the many distinguished expressions we find in this volume the prize winning poem by Edwin Markham, "Our Israfael," which quickly walked ahead of all the poems submitted in THE POETRY REVIEW's Poe contest nine years ago.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

LYDIA, SELLER OF PURPLE.

LYDIA, seller of purple silken wares
In scented purple bales,
Vending her goods in Thyatira's squares
In many-seasoned sales,
Traded not only in purple, though known in the town
As the fair seller of purple in a buff gown,
It was a façon de parler, she sold too
Crimson, brown, ochre and Tyrian blue.

Ochre and Tyrian blue and purple and red,
Undulant ostrich feathers
And resonant words like new and nourishing bread
Sweet-wholesome in all weathers:
Some had been spoken by Paul and some by John,
Both had departed thence but the words stayed on,
And these she vended with parcels of purple and cotton
That fell to rags when the words were unforgotten.

Lydia, seller of purple, and God's Grace,
Supernal linen-draper,
You thought your name would survive on the merchant's case
And your life return to vapour;
But the fame of the purple and Tyrian cloth you prized
Declined when the looms of Rome were utilized,
And *you* alone are left as a lovely wraith
Parading in the purple of your Faith

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

HOSPITAL

PAIN lies in ambush here to-night.
Alone and vigilant, I wait its clawed attack,
Watching life's glimmer hesitate
Beneath blue pools of suffering.
Yesterday is gone, is aeons old;
Dawn's beauty cannot penetrate
The heavy dark; only mind's agony is real,
A cold-lipped dread that outlaws sentiment.
My watching-lamp shines greenly in the gloom,
A tiny isle of friendliness and light
Girdled by fear.
Cries, and footfalls answering,
Crack vigil hours; they are but echoes of a deeper cry
Wherein mind's pain and body's agony
Fuse to prenatal unity.
A deeper breath—
A broken, shuddering sigh
And I return to battle with delirium and death.
Sleep! Sleep!
Life will retain life, my life is yours!
Mind's power must subjugate your pain—
Sleep! sleep!
The clock's slow beat marks step by step this strife,
Breaks, and the cries are stilled . . .

Slowly, on unlit eyes, sleep falls
As dawn creeps shamèd through the room.
Unanchored now, I too will creep
To the winter day—
Garner your new-found peace, O giver of life,
And sleep!

MARGARET LOCHERBIE-GOFF.

Mr. John Masefield, at the opening of a Thomas Hardy memorial room in the Dorset County Museum, said few artists went on growing as Hardy did until well past the age of seventy. Maturity was perhaps the rarest gift to any human being. Thirty-six was a fatal age for poets—it was surprising the number who had died about that age—and those who continued often ceased to do enthusiastic work after fifty. A few, the great ones, went on getting better and better until they were seventy. Ibsen was one such, Thomas Hardy another. He did some of his very best work after sixty-five, and it was astonishing that he grew better and better after fifty. His "Wessex Poems" had been the most powerful influence for the good of English poetry since Robert Browning. He brought to his writing an extraordinary knowledge of the countryside and its past, and invented more methods of writing verse than any other of the great company of English poets.

THE STATE OF POETRY IN AMERICA

A Comprehensive Authoritative Report

THERE are many deterrents to making even the most general estimate of poetry in America in 1940. The vast quantity produced and the great variety of standards represented are the greatest difficulties. Perhaps one way of getting at the question is to consider *why* so much verse is being written. Many elements enter in, but by far the most weighty one is the fact that money can be gained through poetry. It can be sold outright; poetry prizes of unheard of number and size are being offered,—from five to a thousand dollars; publishers of books of verse are finding that some of them pay. But there are other reasons, more hopeful ones, such as the fact that Americans as a class are looking for something outside of finance to cure them of what ails them. Everybody knows that what ails them is a long and greedy debauch at finance. People are studying poetry, reading it, trying to write it. It is the long-waited back-swing from getting and spending and laying waste our powers. Scarcely a little hamlet but studies and tries to write poetry. Everybody is eager for the sound of the silver trumpeter in an age that had thought it could do without silver trumpets.

With more than fifty magazines in America devoted entirely to verse; with half a dozen volumes coming every month from the publishers; with the daily newspapers giving over a little corner for rhymes, jingles and occasionally, poetry; with more than sixty popular magazines printing monthly from two to six poems, who can read all of it? Certainly no inclusive, and perhaps no just appraisal can be made without having read all of it. It is possible thus to miss gems. Magazine and newspaper anthologies help some to general conclusions. But many an anthology comes out (for reasons, and reasons) without any real gems. I have done the anthologies for the last five years, taken a turn at fifty leading newspapers, and have seen all the magazine verse. Of published books, I have read perhaps two-thirds. Upon this basis I give you my impressions.

My report is also based upon an intensive study of the "leading" poets, upon my experience with the machinery of publicity and upon my being a verse-attempter for forty years. Actuated by a sincere desire to come at facts and to portray as well as may be this confusion of tongues that now sounds on our American air, the report hopes, in some little measure, at least, to arrive at fact and estimate the tongues.

But, before we enter upon this, let us tie ourselves to a firm rock in order that we may swim safely back if about to be borne off by waves of criticism. The whole world is re-orientating itself in every way, including things literary. We get poetry news from every corner: our ears hum with hawkers from every time and place. Criticism pours in upon us. We are becoming acquainted with a world-poetry—at last. Not just English; not just continental; not just American; not just occidental; not just modern. It is a time of mental impacts of multiple and complicated kinds, a digesting time, a

time—let us hope—that shall result in a regenerate and superior song for men, a kind of universalized and accessible and more genuine song. Taking this hopeful stance, may we not posit the supposition that the quantity of poetic outburst in America—and elsewhere—may be the hopefullest thing in all creation? And, may we not pardon what seems poetic inharmony because there are many novices in the chairs and the score is new and uncertainly pencilled?

The fact is that literal tons of verse are being produced in America. The anthology racket, personal pushers, literary cliquesters and friends of stockholders of publishing houses account for a part of this bumper poetry crop. But not all. That is the hopeful thing. For, actually, there was never in the history of this land such a widespread and increasing interest in both the reading and the writing of poetry. Literal thousands of humble persons are attempting to create their little (?) beauties with no farther objective than just that. Most of these practisers, working in a downpour of current experimental verse, imitate what they happen to see and hear. But a few—as always—cannot find real beauty in the clever copy. This, again, is hopeful. But a truthful reporter of things poetic in America in 1939 must report a vast cloudburst of jazz, jingle, plagiarism, piffle, paste and pure prune. It is impossible to guess concerning all that goes unpublished.

In this deluge is found most often the sophisticated light thing, done to a gnat's whisker and lighter than thistle-down, leaving nothing that is not made light of,—including God. Lyrics there are, too, by the thousand. The "I" poets have it. But only rarely does one come across a lyric-from-the-heart. Most of them are the from-the-head variety, technically well done, but cold as dry ice. Still, there are those saving few that beat and pulse with the innocent and unplagiarizable warmth of sublimated, experienced, feeling. They are not always signed by those the presses tell us have "arrived." But free verse has the centre of the stage.

Two lacks are apparent in most published verse. First, and most lamentably, there seems to be the general ignorance of the office of the poet. There is too much pose-poetry. There is a dismal scant of sincerity. The second lack is super-triviality of content, camouflaged by etymological ruffles, shirrings, lace and pretty didos. But a third thing threatens to become a plague: morbidity, whose pathologic poetical child is trussed up in such incomprehensible symbol of swaddling clothes that it is unrecognizable and unavailable to 9,999 readers in ten thousand. One wonders why such writers struggle so pathetically to ballyhoo a *name* for themselves. For what logical reason can they want printed and talked about that which they themselves admit (largely) is above being communicable to any but the chosen disciples? Who fails of communication by his words—except to give his honest, healthy, intelligent reader a sense of bafflement,—he, surely, can have but one purpose in writing: to make 9,999 persons in ten thousand feel inferior, since they can't understand: and to make himself appear

superior—he and his clique—since they alone get the point. And this brings us to the heart of the matter. There is a spread of that fearful mental scourge which grows out of pathologically egocentric persons in combination with publicity agents and controlled printing presses.

What, after all, has name—great or small—to do with the real purpose of poetry? *Crossing the Bar* has sung itself into the hearts of 9,999 persons out of every ten thousand who have read it. They love (the only real honor) the man who wrote it because he said to them a comforting and a hope-perpetuating thing: a thing they squared with their own intuition. Had this poem been a much talked-of, much publicized, highly sophisticated jumble of introvert—or extrovert—symbol with problematical content, the world's peace of mind, and integrity to work in hope had been less, and there would have been considerably more hatred in the world. For no one loves (and honours) another who sets out to make him feel belittled and moronic; who sets out to kill his hope. But love (and honour,—even great name) flow unasked to the heart that, compassionate and attemptant, cheers that inner battle of us all. Publicity agents and printing presses are helpless before utter sincerity, and while scholars may remember names, the hungry universal heart remembers best and longest only the wise words, singing.

In America one is constantly reminded of the similarity in the predicament of good poetry and good music. With unprecedented boldness the broadcasting orchestras nonchalantly announce that they have "arranged" this and that and will play. Their "arrangement" most often turns out to be some master's melody, so contorted by attritious sound, super-syncopated rhythm and jest-like interpretation as to be utterly banal. What little verve it has, it has because it is founded upon a thoroughly masterly, sincere, honest and beautiful thing. Many and many a poet here, does just this. Many a long-closed book is dusted. Perhaps in the name of scholarship, I can't say; but I know the result is a most dispiriting plagiarism,—a jazzing of metres, manners, contents and form, done with a super-blatant orchestration that produces a distress of mind more poignant than its musical prototype's. The one difference is that these poets neglect what they seem to consider an unnecessary formality: the announcing of the sources of theme, climax words, rhymes and general make-up. That would be most difficult to do for these dwarfed and deformed poems have been created by the crossing of things not kindred. Thus we have quantities of mannequins dressed remarkably in a variety of fashions and smiling amiably,—but entirely lacking in life-blood.

These manufactured poems are "written to sell," which means studying a publication's audience, subject-matter and editorial *slant* (toward advertisers of all kinds of *things*) and then cold-bloodedly setting out to whack out a poem to fit. The result is often surprisingly life-like—but only that. If you take someone's idea, another's lilt, and a third's

climax-words, you can take off for glory. These writers—or re-writers—produce a product that is like third-time hash decorated with fresh-clipped parsley from the garden border. I cannot resist giving one such poem a line. It was built upon Lizette Woodworth Reece's sonnet, *Tears*, whose opening line,

" When I consider life and its few years "

became in the factoried poem that appeared in one of our oldest, most select periodicals, " When I consider love and its hot tears."

That is one way to get into print. If one foundational masterpiece isn't enough, use two or three. The above hack followed the Reece pattern precisely, including sentence structure and strongest words. But the cleverest of our factory hands clip less transparently. Theirs is a conglomerate, about as convincing as poetry as its sister-in-manufacture, the short story, as a story which can feature an Egyptian flapper in love with a big corporation lawyer living in a small village located on a great lake in the semi-arid High Plains of North America.

The dollar is but one worm that eats and eats at the core of American poetry. The personal pusher, the publicity hound, go any length to get into print, be named over the radio, make appearance before small groups. " Tell the public anything often enough and it will accept what you tell them as true and act upon it." So telling the public who the great poets are has become a deafening noise, and the second worm at the core,—campaigns to establish great name,—eats and eats at poetical integrity.

One wonders, too, how long a literate public will continue to be duped by the anthologist. The racketeering anthologist's methods are obvious enough. The aspiring versifier is cajoled into contributing by the old, old necromancy of flattery. " We have found your work to be highly commendable and are looking forward to receiving from three to five pages for our forthcoming . . ." The blow is scarcely felt by the inflated poet-ego upon publication (or, more likely, before) when the publisher asks anywhere from three to ten dollars the page " to defray expense of publishing your prized contribution." And there you are! Published! You can display proof of that to your friends, read it at club or office, walk a little above your commoner unpublished fellows. And you have one more to add to the list of presses that have printed your name (and the incidental lines attached thereto). When you have " appeared " in ten such collections you are known as " arrived "—at least in your town, and what else matters (so much)?

No anthology maker of this sort who depends upon thirst for distinction to carry his deal through without a hitch (and with much profit) is interested in poetry. He? His one interest is in counting up *how many* poems at so much *per*. There is scarcely a more pathetic thing in existence than some of these anthologies. One especially enterprising racketeer not long since completed an anthology for each of the states—and banked more than a million. And left thousands

of gullible folk believing they are poets. Fortunately, these books are not circulated outside the contributors' circles of acquaintance. When one reads after a name: "Appeared in . . . and . . ." one laments the lack of commercial integrity. But more he laments the lack of common sense.

Of course we have reputable anthologists. But anthologies of living writers are bound to be not so ideally representative as might be supposed. It was an American, however, Mark Van Doren, who compiled a World Anthology, a remarkably fine compilation of poems from the thirty-fifth century B.C. to the twentieth century A.D.

There shouldn't be anything so deadly certain about the printed page,—not any more. Yet, everywhere in America the fallacy seems to be operative that that which is published is, by that very token, superior. Automatically most readers accept, regardless of secret negative reaction. Editors labour under the idea that they are giving their readers "what they want," and aim at a fallacious common denominator, popularly known as "the man of the street." But do they? The vicious triangle—income, column-stuff, advertising—has so branched and entangled its three arms that it can be said without straining the truth that some editors publish column-stuff simply as bait to catch the advertisers' cheques.

In America the radio is busy with poetry. Everything from bumpkin jingle on up can be heard via the air. Mostly it is very poorly read rhyme,—but always, that occasional gem. Poetry is now sponsored over the air by anything from potatoes to mortuaries,—the magazine situation all over again. One magazine sponsored a broadcast for several years. This Columbia feature netted,—so its commentator said,—just forty tons of poetry. I could not believe that. Verification proved that it was not fourteen, nor four, as I had hoped I had misunderstood, but *forty tons*. The best, of course, after being read over the air, or published in the magazine, is now out in anthology form, for which the writers of it pay at so much the page. The residue —I suppose about 1,999 pounds—was shipped to William Jewell College where it is to become the "material" for the study of poetry in America!

We have the poetic tour with us again—increasingly. From Edna St. Vincent Millay and Carl Sandburg, to the least of our town bards they tour the states—or counties—and read us their lines. It is a good sign. It restores to poetry one of its most vital and ancient qualities—the aural appeal. Then, too, it does away with much criticism and exposition: these touring poets leave no question with listeners as to just what they mean.

As to literary cliques, we have them large and small. In preparation for this bit of writing, thirty state organizations were interviewed. Most of them are decidedly not cliques but are doing a sincere and generous piece of work fostering the love and knowledge of good poetry. But some resemble one local clique whose member I

approached with the question, "Where does your society meet?" "At homes of members over the state," was the reply. "Who is your secretary?" I then asked and the reply (but no answer) came, "O such writers as —— and —— and —— belong." The inference was not as humiliating as it should have been since my query was merely to get material for a paper on poetry in America, and not to write the secretary begging admittance into the charmed circle.

All this, I dare say, is true in part or as a whole in England, and elsewhere. Poetry in America, and England, and elsewhere goes on. Certainly it is for no age to know where or in whom its current flows deepest. Careless of name—as the true poet always is—unruffled by the clamour in the poetry market-place or by the rosters of the "great," somewhere, perhaps, some Emily Dickinson writes the indelible and authentic poetry of to-day; some Emily Dickinson, disdaining publisher and publicizer, whose discovered lines a hundred years from now will make these words of evaluation just so many more empty husks to be added to that already stupendous pile of emptied critical judgments.

Time, perhaps, to swim back to our rock. Walt Whitman's prophetic words, "I hear America singing," are being fulfilled, to-day. From Oregon to Maine, from Arizona to Georgia, from the Dominion to the Gulf, America is singing. If the songs differ, if some seem to transcend in beauty and significance, what matter? Even if there are those who must borrow their songs, those who must scream and strut like gaudy peacocks, perhaps that is better than being inarticulate. Songs of peace, worded to the fine and the rough ear; songs of hope both high and low; songs of a kindlier to-morrow—these we hear, though there are many who still dolorously chant of God gone from his heaven, of futility of breath, of the grisly skeleton. America is finding her voice. Why should not each pipe as best he may, unridiculed? Simple words can hold the greatest song and he who sings from the heart approaches near unto the Great Singer through his song. We may not all be nightingales, but our slighter melodies, poured out upon our own meadows and skies, may, after all, be the necessary and diverse reeds and strings for that rounded out and perfect song of peace that, some day, the whole world shall sing together.

Wichita, Kansas, U.S.A. KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN.

Mrs. Hugh Grace, Sudbury, Ontario: We cannot value THE POETRY REVIEW in terms of dollars and cents. It gives us so much for so little. I am sure that every member of The Poetry Society and perhaps the whole world realizes what it is doing to preserve the best in modern poetry. I feel I owe more to THE POETRY REVIEW than I can ever repay. To write to come up to its standard is the high aim we strive for.

A CYNICAL CLASSICIST

Prominence was given to A. E. Housman's works in THE POETRY REVIEW at the time of the poet's death, but now that the world has been presented with what is described as "a first and definitive" edition of his collected verse (Jonathan Cape, 7s. 6d.), a brief re-assessment will, perhaps, not be out of place.

Housman's pessimistic outlook, his lack of belief in any ultimate good in this world, his permanent preoccupation with death and the grave, and that almost morbid nostalgia for an unattainable utopia wherein sin and sorrow, strife and senility would find no place, are too well known to demand more than passing mention. None the less, it is perhaps of interest, albeit a profitless undertaking, to speculate as to the effect the present world upheaval would have had upon the poet's already disillusioned and fatalistic muse.

Allowing for the years that have gone by since he composed them, there is, as it is, something unhappily prophetic about the lines,

> "The signal-fires of warning
> They blaze, but none regard;
> And on through night to morning
> The world runs ruinward."

Housman's poems, of transparent clarity throughout, yet rarely descending into the obvious, are calculated to impress most intelligent readers and verse-lovers at first acquaintance; their rhythm has the fluidity of music, their craftsmanship is well-nigh immaculate. Yet at a second reading (with one or two notable exceptions) they have a way of appearing to us not quite so brilliant as we had at first imagined. Some, on closer examination still, are inclined to raise serious doubts in our minds as to whether they are not in fact superb specimens of verbal leger-de-main, so slight is the argument around which their meticulous pattern is spun.

To question a poet's choice of words leads the critic on to dangerous ground, but we will take one example to illustrate our point. In poem No. XLI of the "A Shropshire Lad" series we meet with the line, "The beautiful and death-struck year," which, at first glance, seems to bear the imprint of true genius. But is the epithet "death-struck" in this context as meaningful as it is undoubtedly effective-*sounding*, seeing that the poet proceeds to couple the year with the spring-tide as well as autumn?

As with individual words, so with stanzas and, indeed, whole poems. The "finish" of the thing seems to have counted for more with Housman than the argument, or even the accuracy of the poem's imagery. Has he not himself written "Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it"?

The poet, in short, would seem to have set himself the task of clothing a strictly limited number of basic themes (all of them disillusioned) in as many different elegant and polished garbs as possible. The result is that this volume of his collected verse is one to dip into

rather than to read at a sitting from cover to cover, for in the latter case this harping on sin and mortality tends to pall. An audience will grow tired of always watching the same actor, however skilfully and frequently he may vary his costume.

One is occasionally put out by Housman's persistent use of the conjunction "and" where an adverb would have seemed more justified; this idiosyncrasy is particularly noticeable in "Last Poems" No. XXXI. Occasionally, too, an ugly or awkward inversion mars a stanza, but in short-lined, rhymed verse such as he mostly employs, these minor blemishes by their very infrequency serve the better to remind us how deftly Housman turns the majority of his lines.

There are frequent subtleties of scansion, too, such as the additional rhymed line at the end of a stanza (ABABB), which adds so significantly to such a poem as No. XXXII of "More Poems," or the shortening of the penultimate line, as in "Last Poems" Nos. XXXIV and XLI.

For sheer pictorial effect, what is more, one needs to search far afield to find the equal of such lines as,

> "By blowing realms of woodland
> With sunstruck vanes afield,
> And cloud-led shadows sailing
> About the windy weald,"

which, with a commendable economy of words, conjures up the very smell of the English countryside on a breezy spring day.

There is at least one outstandingly powerful poem among "Last Poems," and this is No. XXXVI, "Revolution," with its two remarkable lines,

> "The vast and moon-eclipsing cone of night,
> Her towering foolscap of eternal shade."

If we except Nos. I ("Atys"), XII and XXII ("R.L.S."), it is open to question whether Mr. Laurence Housman did his brother a good service by including the "Additional Poems," for they seem but pale echoes of other and better poems in the book. Perhaps, after all, the poet himself was the better judge, when he so stringently sifted his works for publication.

A curious misprint occurs in poem No. XXX of "A Shropshire Lad," where in the third line of stanza two, the word "reins" should, we submit, read "veins."

Summing up, we would say that this collection confirms our earlier impression that in A. E. Housman we have a poet whose works will come to occupy a clear-cut, if narrow niche in English Letters, by virtue of their exquisite finish. Yet, that a poetical craftsmanship as fine as his should have been confined to so limited a range of thought and so disillusioned a philosophy, will surely remain for ever a source of profound regret to posterity.

Miss Edith Sitwell has forestalled and virtually invalidated any

criticism that might be directed toward errors of omission and commission in her new *Poetry Anthology* (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.), by freely admitting that the selection represents her own personal predilections. None the less, in her discursive preface, aptly labelled " Some Notes at Random," she goes to the trouble of analyzing numerous poems therein so minutely from a technical aspect, that we must necessarily assume that technical excellence has been the criterion of her choice. The question then arises as to whether in an anthology of poetry clearly intended for the delectation of the " middle-brow " and not for the edification of the specialist, such line-by-line dissection is either warranted or desirable. The more so as one suspects that Miss Sitwell frequently discovers among the examples she puts under the microscope subtleties which the poet himself achieved quite spontaneously, and sometimes unknowingly, by virtue of his genius and his " ear."

It may, of course, be argued that those who are not interested need not trouble themselves with these analytical probings ; but would not a few illuminating notes concerning the poets themselves and the circumstances in which their loveliest works came to be written have served a more useful purpose ?

But enough of carping criticism ! Miss Sitwell has set before us a sumptuous feast, in connection with which her publishers have taken our depleted purses amply into consideration. If we find the selections from the French poets somewhat unoriginal, and deplore the inclusion of those pedestrian limericks of Edward Lear in place of one or more of this author's delicious children's verses, this is also, no doubt, a matter of taste, in regard to which we are quite as fallible as the compiler herself.

In this connection we may recur to Mr. Robert Lynd's anthology of a different order. Not only does he set about his task from an opposite angle to Miss Sitwell, in that he seeks to eliminate personal preference in favour of the opinions of " good judges " but the field is restricted to the period roughly from Hardy down to the propagandist school of Auden, Spender and Day Lewis. Apart from a noticeable omission or two and a number of poems the inclusion of which would scarcely seem to be justified (objections to which every compiler of anthologies lays himself open, particularly if he claims to be " representative "), Mr. Lynd has selected well, and this volume should find favour with poetry-lovers who have neither the time, opportunity nor inclination to study individual books of verse in order to determine for themselves the relative merits of their authors.

Had Mr. Donald Parson (who deserves to be judged by a high standard) in his collection of verse, *Glass Flowers* (Independent Press, 3s. 6d.) subjected his poems to more judicious scrutiny and timely pruning the result might well have been a notable volume. As it is, the book is marred by one or two second-rate poems and several rank bad lines.

The name-poem is ambitious in theme, but much of it lacks spontaneity; the touch is at times uncertain and the imagery tends to become dustily traditional. He is more successful with his sonnets, which constitute the bulk of the volume; but these vary greatly. There is, frequently, a tendency to employ alliteration as an end rather than as a means, as in the lines, "The soul too fragile and the flesh too frail" and "Finding the summer solstice of the soul." The sustained sibilants in the latter merely irritate. And the author would have done well to omit "Delilah," with its archaisms and pseudo-philosophizing, "Death and Love" and "To a Judas Tree," which is, perhaps, the worst poem in the book.

But it is time to come to the credit side. Let us then testify that "Vanity," "The Salmon," "The Buffoon" (apart from a weak last line) and "Grief" are all well-knit and satisfying sonnets. Also, the poem "Call Me Not Dead" contains a shining metaphor, ". . . the salmon still must sheathe his silver sword within the scabbard foam." There is a novel and thoughtful poem on the theme of Hamlet's mental state, entitled "Insanity," while the Doppelgn äger theme is deftly handled in "The Recognition."

Perhaps the poet's finest lines are these four from his sonnet "To Verdi,"

> "When I am old and count the summer done,
> To courage deaf and to ambition blind;
> When inspiration, like a burnt-out sun,
> No longer warms the planet of my mind."

E. Curt Peters.

Poetry of the Unconscious

Too much has been written, too much attention given, to many of the various off-shoots of Freudian psychology. Freud was a great pioneer, and his theories of the unconscious have already proved the starting-point for developments which may well be the genuine medicine for a sick world, and, like every pioneer or discoverer, he himself cannot be held finally responsible for the follies of disciples who misunderstand the essence of the master's teaching. We are now beginning to attain to a right balance. One of the most irritating off-shoots of psycho-analytic teaching was the birth and mushroom growth of surréalism, which provided excuses for all sorts of absurdities in different branches of art. To explain an infantile art-production as emanating directly from the unconscious was to absolve it of shortcomings and invest it with a mysterious interest and significance. Yet, as usual, a germ of truth was hidden in the labyrinth of unreason. The sources of art do lie in the unconscious. But the factor not to be forgotten is that the incalculable realm of the human psyche designated "the unconscious" is of an infinitely wider, deeper and more mysterious nature than the Freudians have supposed. Like all materialist philosophy, discovery and thought, psycho-analysis is excellent so

far as it goes ; the defect is that it stops less than half-way on the road to truth.

Now at last a book of poems has appeared, *Shade Tides* by Noel Essex (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.), which is a genuine product of the " unconscious " and at the same time a beautifully-wrought work of art, both lyrically and philosophically satisfying, and disclosing a vast field for speculation. Mr. Jackson Knight in his interesting and thought-provoking Introduction rightly suggests that the poetry of Noel Essex " may claim attention from all who have literary sensibility, including poets, but not least from scholars and other investigators of the mind." We would go further, and say not that it may but that it must, that this is poetry which investigators of the mind cannot afford to overlook, and that it points a direction which contemporary poets will neglect at their peril.

The imagery is clearly of such a nature that the normal intellectual consciousness *could not* have achieved it. Such imagery cannot be *thought*. It springs directly from the mysterious source where all art creations germinate, unknown to the creator, and even when created, not always fully understood by him. This, as Mr. Knight points out, is peculiarly true of Noel Essex's work. And throughout, romanticism, and the *essential life* of all poetry (which defies close definition) blends easefully with modernism. In the poem " Mist Memory," for example, the technique demands close study, and it is noteworthy that form and content blend to perfection. Observe the use of single-line rhyming words : " ebbing " " webbing," " recoiling," " toiling," and all achieved with the unconscious facility of spontaneous poetic creation. " The Making of Poetry " partly defines the process in a poem packed with imagery to rouse the sated critic of contemporary verse to a rare pitch of excitement. And in all the unique diction and imagery there is nothing forced, nothing wilfully obscure, as in so much modern writing. All is inevitable—the fateful, destiny-weighted inevitability of true poetry, which stands

> Like tongues of might . . .
> Upon the all-seeing prophets' heads.

The magnificent long poem *Christian Paganism* is compact of wisdom, beauty and truth, the deep-lying wisdom of the ages, mysteriously contacted by some rare poets. What a document for our own era of insanity and crime :

> Bring back the lost dignity of man ;
> Restore the fruits of the golden tree
> Without which the race of men must die.
> O pluck the satisfying fruit from the tree ;
> Pluck the fruit, I say—
> The Fruit of Love.
> Pluck. Taster and give to them
> Who fear the fruit of the gods,
> Who fear knowledge,

Who fear the fruit of God . . .
. . . God wills that man should understand . . .
(" Remember always . . .
The Divine Sacrifice and the Divine Origin
Of the Race of Men ").

* * * *

ARTHUR ROW writes of our old friend, Sir Frank Benson, who as a vice-president of The Poetry Society drew up the regulations governing the Society's examinations in diction and verse speaking, and acted as examiner: It was with the Otho Stuart Co. at the Adelphi Theatre in 1904–6 that I was brought into active contact with the Benson tradition and the Benson atmosphere. Three quarters of this company (which included Lily Brayton, Oscar Asche, E. Lyall Sweete and Alfred Brydone) had been recent members of F. R. Benson's Co. and many of the lesser parts were filled by young actors breathing with the spirit with which their extraordinary leader had freshly endowed them; and there were manifold stories told concerning the insatiable enthusiasm of their distinguished chief, or " Pa " as he was affectionately termed. I was also fortunate in witnessing nearly half the Benson revivals and am able therefore to present a fairly accurate estimate of his dramatic powers. F. R. Benson was hardly the " great actor " with which our newspaper headlines have so recently been full. His vocal endowments and his carriage placed him at a disadvantage, but had he restricted his performances to parts in which his peculiar individualities were of use his repute as an actor would have been greatly enhanced. Richard II, King Lear, Cardinal Beaufort in *Henry VI*, part II were played with undoubted genius that lives long in the memory, but his representations of more familiar parts were not so successful.

It is to his many revivals in Nos. 1, 2 and 3 companies throughout the British Isles and all over the Empire to the West Indies that must win to posterity his outstanding glory and not only as a producer of the Shakespeare dramas but also for the revival of the old comedies of Sheridan, Goldsmith and Colman.

Benson's methods of production were simple and adequate. There was no straining at effect with lights or unnatural backgrounds, or by the empty attempt at resuscitation of the primitive Elizabethan ways: fads were forgotten, Shakespeare was remembered, with nothing to disturb *the central focus* and the fact that " *the play was the thing*." It is safe to say that since the days of our immortal bard no stage producer has given to his countrymen one-twentieth part of the numerous well-balanced performances of Shakespeare that " F.R." has done, and it was both fitting and remarkable that some few years ago we were told that Sir Frank Benson had been in spirit-communication with Shakespeare and Aeschylus, the former saying: " I see that you are busy with my plays. Continue."

THE ESSENCE OF GREAT POETRY

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

Sir,—Mr. Lynd Nathan, in his interesting remarks about the letter to which I was a signatory, and which appeared in your November-December issue, says that I, and your other correspondents, neither "pointed to what actual good poems there are produced nor were in any way explicit as to how this delectable state of poetry which is obviously what everybody desires, can be obtained." As I am now in uniform, it would be difficult for me to collaborate with your other correspondents in replying to Mr. Nathan. But I think I can, on their behalf, plead guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy, to the first charge, and not guilty to the second.

For, although I cannot deny that we failed to point to what actual good poems there are produced to-day, I should like to submit that this was not necessary to our purpose. We desired to define the road to true poetry, leaving the individual to be the judge, to give criterions which the individual might himself apply to verse as a test of its poetic worth. We gave what we considered the essential qualities of poetry, and left it at that. It we had wished to name contemporary poets and poems which we considered of worth, we could have done so. Mr. Nathan suggests that we get hold of one year's back numbers of THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day*, and pick out what poems attain our standard. I do not intend to do this, as, while this selection might contain several works which are memorable poetry, it would not take us any further in discovering why our major and leading minor poets are writing so little true poetry.

Therefore I intend, instead, to name a few poems, all from well-known anthologies, and, thus, easily accessible, which I feel attain the standards we set down in our letter. I read a bitter review, in your November issue, of Geoffrey Grigson's anthology, "New Verse." While I fully agree with reviewer's remarks about Mr. Grigson's recipe for modern poetry, I feel the claim that, "in every poem, almost without exception, there is . . . . something nasty in the wood-shed," to be a supreme example of critical prejudice. Several of the poems, I should say, even reach the true pinnacle of greatness. Therefore, I shall, first of all, give examples from the collection. The following seem to me to be fine poems, worthy of our literary tradition:

The Festival, by Frederic Prokosch.
Ballad, by W. H. Auden.
Dover, by W. H. Auden.
The Compassionate Fool, by Norman Cameron.
By Leave of Luck, by Norman Cameron.

From amongst well-known twentieth-century poems to be found in one, at least, of "The Oxford Book of Modern Verse," "The Faber Book of Modern Verse," Robert Lynd's "Twentieth Century Poetry" and Methuen's "An Anthology of Modern Verse," I should select the following:

Yeats' "Lake Isle of Innisfree," "The Sorrow of Love," "When you are old," "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" and "The Man Who Dreamed of Fairyland."

Eliot's "Ash Wednesday," "La Figlia Che Piange," "The Hollow Men."

Hopkins' "Pied Beauty" and "I have desired to go."

Auden's "O Love, the interest itself in Thoughtless Heaven" and "'O where are you going?" said reader to rider.'

Owens' "Anthem For Doomed Youth."

Sassoon's "Everyone Sang."

All these—favourites of mine, picked at random and from memory—are, I am certain, great poetry. All have beauty of language and expression, have depth and sincerity of feeling. They are not obscure or rhetorical. All are simple, have beauty of phrase and line. All express emotions of the poet.

Who, judged by the same standards, are the century's greatest poets? Hardy, Yeats, Hopkins, who is, after all, of our century in all but date, and Bridges, Eliot and Auden, perhaps. And who are writing the finest poetry to-day? Ruther Pitter and Christopher Hassall, Auden, Prokosch, Spender and Geoffrey Scott, Gawsworth and Aldington, Laurence Whistler and Roy Campbell. There, then, is a list, which may, to some extent, answer Mr. Nathan's first charge.

The second charge, namely, that we were not "in any way explicit as to how this delectable state of poetry ... can be attained", is easier to answer. In our letter, we gave what we considered to be the basic elements of poetry. Perhaps we were trying to define the indefinable, but, at all events, we did set down certain principles which we considered the poet ought to remember. And, surely, in so doing, we were, in some measure, pointing out the way to achieve "this delectable state of poetry." If our poets cease worrying about the trappings of life, and penetrated to the heart of things, sought beauty, truth and strength, found perfection of phrase, line and expression, would not our age be more worthily placed in the annals of English literature?

We have great poets—in embryo. Auden, for example, is a poet born. But he has based his work on unsound principles. He and the other Modernists have realized that poets should not place themselves on a pedestal, should enter into life. But they have deemed the vital things of life to be the petty politics and industrial problems of our own age. They have forgotten that the very centre of life is composed of the passions, of the eternal elements. For God, they have substituted Marx, for love, sex.

Further, instead of learning from the faults of their predecessors, they have determined to cut themselves right off from the past, to ignore and do without what are good of our traditions, to forget all that literary history has to teach. Yet their most significant works are those untainted by their political creeds, and relying to some extent on tradition and convention. Auden is best in his ballads, songs, light

verse. Yeats was best in his early works, before he became unnecessarily obscure and verbose, before he let his intellect crowd out his emotions.

If I construe him rightly, Mr. Nathan seems to have misunderstood the whole spirit of our letter. For he writes as follows:

"But the emotionalism of cliques tends to put the abstract idea of poetry as an entity, poetry the good, the true, the beautiful in itself—before ever a line has been written—on so high a pedestal that the poet, surrounded by his abstracted coterie, ceases to remember that his function should be that of an artist and a craftsman whose job is to convey to others his delight.

"Hence such a letter as appeared in your November issue . . . a type of lament . . . that is becoming tiresome. . . ."

Apparently, then, Mr. Nathan thinks we want to put poetry on a pedestal, to forget that the poet is "an artist and a craftsman, whose job is to convey to others his delight." Yet the whole idea expressed in the letter was the responsibility of the poet to the people. "It is our belief," we wrote, "that poetry is a heritage of the whole British people and should not, therefore, be so surrounded by a fog of intellectualism that it is made incomprehensible to a large portion of the public."

Furthermore, in our letter, we "regretted that modern poetry is singularly poor in beauty of phrase and line; each phrase, each word, is as important as the whole and the beauty of one should not be sacrificed for that of the other." Surely, this advocates the return to artistry and craftsmanship that Mr. Nathan demands, as does our insistence on form and arrangement.

Indeed, I begin to wonder whether Mr. Nathan really read our letter, or whether he merely glanced over it. Anyway, I hope that he will re-read the poems I mention, and that they will give to him the pleasure that they have given, and will always give, to me.

Poetry has been defined as "deep feeling expressed in beautiful language." If our poets have depth of feeling, and will only learn to express themselves adequately, we shall get fine poetry. Those who are shallow at heart should drop out without further delay. Those who feel deeply and originally, should improve their expression. For a shallow man will never acquire depth of feeling, will never know the passions of a true poet, but the dumb can learn to speak. Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth are there to teach them.

Yours faithfully,

Cowley, Jan. 24. PETER A. D. BAKER.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

SIR,—I wish to thank Mr. Lynd Nathan for his letter in the January–February, issue of THE POETRY REVIEW, on "The Poet's Job." Such a letter is at once encouraging and stimulating. One feels, "better," for reading it. Your correspondent has truly understood the under-

lying idea of my letter in November–December issue. With his remark that, "Poetry is eternal," I am in hearty agreement. I am also fully persuaded that the majority of our modern poets will not "live," beyond the years of their natural life. Mr. Nathan's reference to being able to get into the fashionable magazine is full of sting. To quote his words: "It keeps him safe," and in the running, but it "is a negative virtue." It pleases a small circle, but the "world runs away."

One turns to "Poeta Exclusus," by Mr. Charles Whitby in your issue of November–December:

> "A pinch of talent and a pound of cheek,"
> Go far to set young Hopeful on the stage,—
> Fiat—the word goes forth, friend whispers friend,
> "This lad's the goods."
> Whence comes it . . . the august command,
> Two Laws, must strictly be obeyed—they are!
> —To lend, "no blasted amateur," a hand
> Nor dare acclaim an unacknowledged star,
> Once on the map, the Minstrels fortune's made
> "He's 'one of us,' a pro, he's in the Trade."

If this is true is it any wonder, in the words of Mr. Nathan "the world runs away"? And is it futile to hope for a revival of the "Poetry which is eternal," or must we be compelled to try and be content with the baser "poetry which is temporary"? For the manufactured "stuff" must always wear the mask of hypocrisy. Yours truly,

Berry Brow, Huddersfield. ALBERT H. HODGES.

ART AND REALISM

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

SIR,—If this war is going to lead to a renewal of Martin Tupperism, as Mr. Steuart's letter would suggest, THE POETRY REVIEW will have to close down, for there will be no poetry to review. Before this happens I would like to put in a word in defence of poetry, as opposed to didacticism and moralizing and prettiness. In art there is neither beauty nor ugliness, or rather, ugliness and beauty are both beauty, considered aesthetically. Whatever is alive, strongly conceived and sincerely presented, is art. The affected, confused, feeble and abstract, are abortions; not alive, and therefore not art. Whether the subject-matter is beautiful or hideous has nothing to do with it. Mr. Steuart, if he is logical, will put a ban on Dante's "Inferno." The tremendous and dramatic picture of Ugolino in the filthy frozen pool of the traitors, with his teeth fixed in the skull of Ruggieri, gorging his hate for the whole of eternity, himself the victim and the avenger, is not pretty. The plot of "Faust" is not edifying, it is just a vulgar tale of seduction. A Moor smothering his young wife in a frenzy of animal jealousy, is very bad. A louse on a lady's bonnet, more especially in church, is nasty. A prostitute pulled out of the Thames, with her eyes staring

through muddy impurity, is bad and sad, even without deep scrutiny. I cannot agree that Wagner's plots are edifying—their motifs are chiefly of adultery, incest, craftiness and violence. "Parsifal," with its religious, mystical subject, is by far the least good of Wagner's works. But one could continue in this strain indefinitely. Sin is as a rule better material than virtue, for sin contains itself and its opposite, its redemption, whereas virtue contains only itself, so is less dynamic, less fruitful. Art portrays life, and life is conflict. To attempt to bring life into the narrow, stuffy realm of moralizing, is to have missed even the fringe of its meaning. Wordsworth, being a poet, and not a Tupper, when he tried to moralize as a rule soared high into ethics, often into the sublime. Like every human being, a poet belongs to his time, but if a true poet he will also transcend his time. I agree with Mr. Steuart that a "raw and stinking pork chop" worn on a girl's head is disgusting. On a girl's head it is a filthy affectation. But in its right place, on a dungheap, it would be perfectly good subject for a work of art. One of the pictures of the world is of a slit up bullock in a butcher's shop. Art cannot be dictated to, nor confined in "Proverbial Philosophy."

I am, sir, yours, etc.

London, W.11. Jan. 23. JOAN REDFERN.

"THE GRAVEN IMAGE"

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

SIR,—Do we in our heart of hearts feel that poetry is not really of any great importance? Do we feel that we may say in verse what we dare not say in prose? I asked myself these questions after reading "The Graven Image."

I quote: "And man them with their pale unwilling sons." That is —Our young men are driven, pale and unwilling to man the guns. Rather beastly in prose, and grotesquely false, demonstratably so. The facts are that, over and above the men called up, more than 100,000 have volunteered, a larger number than in the corresponding period of 1914. Young men are volunteering in every corner of the Empire in their tens of thousands, men of every race and all religions, and not only in the Empire but in the United States, to aid the gallant Finns—"pale and unwilling"—in every corner of the earth. If ever there was a war of Christ *v.* Anti-Christ we are in it now. Cant and hypocrisy lies in the denial of and refusal to utter this truth. In a rhetorical finale we are asked

> "And how can they observe an equal tryst
> With Israel's God of Battles and with—CHRIST?"

For those who see the whole Christ the answer obviously is—I can. I do. So many will see only the Christ of the "meek," the "peacemaker," but refuse the "overcometh," which means warfare. They acknowledge the Christ of "Suffer the little children," of the Magda-

lene, but by their silence deny the Christ of the scourge, the Christ who poured scorn and contempt on the hypocrite, the liar, and the coward. The Christ of " I come not to bring peace but a sword into the world." For me that saying means—remember the degradation of His times, that righteousness was individual, scattered, without cohesion and inspiration—" I am the sword, the armour, the rallying point, and the Captain of the Hosts of God that shall be."—The complete warrior, even to the dedication—death.

I do not know what poetry means to the majority of your contributors ; to me and for me poetry is truth or it is nothing. It is life, not art. Art is but the container, austere or ornamented, plain or beautiful, but it's the wine that matters. As I see it, negation cannot rise above verse, sound without substance is a poor thing.

BERESFORD RICHARDS.

Craigavad, Co. Down. 12 January, 1940.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM writes : I am thankful " The Graven Image " has provoked one good letter of protest and contradiction. I believe Mr. Richards is entirely sincere in what he says—but so am I. I admit that hundreds of thousands of young men have volunteered to fight for the cause of Freedom and to go in aid of the gallant Finns. I honour them. I also honour the " pale unwilling sons ", the young Oxford and Cambridge men, many of whom I know personally, who go because they must, believing that though they kill a dozen of the enemy, it will not help the cause of freedom. The true martyr is he who suffers for the sake of his convictions, no matter what his convictions are, and many men are prepared to die themselves or suffer any indignity rather than kill others.

Poets share with priests the responsibility of keeping the torch of life and light burning, and the poets of THE POETRY REVIEW have done this for thirty years. However, to be pioneers we must all think not alike, but differently. We must all think deeply and trenchantly and at the expense of blood and tears, not of others but of our own. I believe every question could be illuminated to transfiguration if we could, through the light of Christ, see God as He really is.

FEET OF CLAY

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

Two Americans, Mr. Ezra Pound and Mr. T. S. Eliot, have exercised much influence in the past twenty years on young writers of verse. Both men are undeniably poets, though both have also perpetrated grotesque rubbish, and their influence has been increased by their reputed erudition. Mr. John Sparrow in his *Sense and Poetry* (p. 128) dryly observes :

> " much of the respect accorded to Mr. Pound is apparently due to his reputation for scholarship in Latin, Greek, Provençal, and Chinese. His learning in the latter pair of languages I take

on trust; it is difficult to believe that the mistakes which occur almost as often as he ventures into the former pair are due invariably to the printer."

Over twenty years ago Mr. Pound published a volume of twelve poems called *Homage to Sextus Propertius*; but only within the last year or two has it attracted critical attention. Each poem is found on examination to be based on a poem by Propertius, or on part of a poem: sometimes passages from another poem are interpolated.

I was moved to make an examination by learning not long ago from the pages of *The New Statesman* and of *English*[1] that the *Homage* is a treasure-house of unbelievable "howlers." Thus Propertius, referring to the Cimbri, the Great Germanic tribe, who for long terrorised Rome until at length Marius overthrew them, wrote "Cimbrorum minas et benefacta Mari." (The Cimbrian threats and the services rendered by Marius).

Mr. Pound offers "homage" to the Roman poet by turning this into "Welsh mines and the profits Marus (*sic*) got out of them." Here is another gem which I discovered. "Tale facis carmen docta testudine quale Cynthius impositis temperat articulis." (Thou makest such music as Apollo modulates with fingers pressed upon his well-skilled lyre.) And here Mr. Pound surpasses even himself.

"Like a trained and performing tortoise,
I would make music in your fashion,
If she should command it,
With her husband asking a remission of sentence."

The Latin was naturally difficult to find, but the "tortoise" gave the clue, though I could not identify the original from which Mr. Pound got "her husband." Then suddenly light broke. "Cynthius." Why, of course! "Mr. Cynthia!"

Mr. Eliot's admiration of Mr. Pound is like that of a junior schoolboy for the Captain of the School. To Mr. Pound Mr. Eliot dedicated *The Waste Land*, inscribing it to *il miglior fabbro* (the better craftsman). In 1928 he presented to the British public a selection from Mr. Pound's Poetry. It contains things of beauty, but what are we to think of the critical judgment of an editor who could admiringly reprint such a "poem" as this?

PAPYRUS

Spring . . . . . .
Too long . . . . . .
Gongula . . . . . .

That is the whole poem.

In his preface Mr. Eliot refers to Mr. Pound's "Homage to Sextus Propertius," which does not appear in the selection. He says:

"I have omitted one long poem which Mr. Pound might him-

[1] There is an amusing article by Mr. Martin Gilkes in No. 8 of *English* (the magazine of the English Association).

self have included: the 'Homage to Sextus Propertius.' I was doubtful of its effect upon the uninstructed reader, even with my instructions. If the uninstructed reader is not a classical scholar, he will make nothing of it; if he be a classical scholar, he will wonder why this does not conform to his notions of what translation should be. It is not a translation, it is a paraphrase, or still more truly (for the instructed) a *persona*. It is also a criticism of Propertius, a criticism which in a most interesting way insists upon an element of humour, of irony and mockery, in Propertius, which Mackail and other interpreters have missed. I think that Pound is critically right, and that Propertius was more civilized than most of his interpreters have admitted; nevertheless, I have thought best to omit the poem—though it is a most interesting study in versification, and one of the necessary prolegomena to the Cantos. I felt that the poem 'Homage to Propertius' would give difficulty to many readers: because it is not enough a "translation," and because it is, on the other hand, too much "translation," to be intelligible to any but the accomplished student of Pound's poetry. It is in my opinion, a better criticism of Propertius than M. Benda's 'Properce.' I observe in passing that it was Mr. Pound who introduced Benda to England and America."

For years Mr. Eliot has been idolized as a critic, but in that one paragraph—to which I have never yet seen any allusion—he has unconsciously revealed the feet of clay. For in the first place it would be regarded as utterly unbelievable that a poet could accept Mr. Pound's doggerel as a true reproduction of the poetry which won for the Roman undying renown and ranked Cynthia alongside of Catullus's Lesbia among the Immortals, and only a little lower than Helen. But Mr. Eliot has done the impossible. And in the second place, Mr. Eliot here poses as a Latin scholar, and awards praise and blame. He has depreciated the work of so great a classical scholar and so eminent a critic of poetry as Dr. J. W. Mackail, O.M., formerly President of the Classical Association and Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Mr. Eliot shows not the slightest indication that he is aware of Mr. Pound's abundant and grotesque blunders, blunders which anybody with sufficient Latinity to take the Loeb edition and with its aid to examine Mr. Pound's *Homage* (sic!) can detect for himself. He who does this will see that again and again Mr. Pound has manifestly tried to render a line or couplet but has merely put into the mouth of Propertius ridiculous drivel that has not the remotest relation to the Latin. Of all this Mr. Eliot is serenely unconscious. He does not see that the mockery, etc., which he discovers are merely the ignorant buffooneries of Mr. Pound. Mr. Pound's publishers quote Mr. Stephen Spender as writing in *The Spectator* that the *Homage* is "the finest development of his early work." I would like to hear our fellow-member, Mr. Guy Kendal, poet and famous Headmaster, on this

opinion of his former pupil. Possibly Propertius's Latin may be beyond Mr. Spender, but it is hard to understand how he, like Mr. Eliot, can accept Mr. Pound's gibberish as poetry.

There is nothing disgraceful in having "small Latin and less Greek." Many men of vast learning are in that position. But Mr. Eliot has impaled himself on the horns of this dilemma. If he is a Latin scholar he should have easily detected the comic "howlers" made by Mr. Pound. If he is not, what right has he to pontificate *ex cathedra*, as he has done? Many who have hitherto bowed to his authority will surely say

"Cassio, I love thee:
But nevermore be officer of mine."

Athenaeum Club. EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

APPRECIATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

Dear Sir,—May I, as one of many, say how grateful I was to read your article in the last issue commenting on the fact that the 50th anniversary of the death of Robert Browning passed without attention by the national newspapers.

In these anxious days, the teaching and philosophy of the World's Poet should indeed be held aloft as light to help us to see and to put on the armoury hung in our halls.

As you say: "indications suggest we are not prepared, not fit to win the tremendous war that is now being waged, that it is not realized that we are warring not only against principalities and powers. . . ." Perhaps—when the fires have scorched us enough, we shall be glad to seek the healing balm of decencies!

Yours faithfully,

Chesham Bois, Bucks. S. FINLASON.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

Sir,—I trust the war will not handicap you too much in carrying on your work, although no doubt it will seriously interfere. It has changed the world for all thinking people. Would that all nations might honestly and willingly determine to sit together and use intelligence and goodwill instead of blind force and hate, to further the progress of all peoples. Surely the goodwill in the hearts of multitudes everywhere must eventually make itself felt. In the present struggle Canada is shoulder to shoulder with the Mother Country, and we think of you who are there very prayerfully.

Shortly after my first poems had been written, my son, then a young college student said "Do you know that the Icelandic folk, the farmers and fishermen at Gimli (Manitoba) write reams and reams of poetry. They just can't help expressing themselves." It does seem as if poems stir about in the mind waiting to be born; and they tease and torment

until, to have peace again, the brain is forced to give them birth."

One realizes that an enormous amount of poetry is being written that can never find a place in print, although much of it may be quite as good as that which does see the light of print; and of that published, comparatively little ever reaches an understanding mind, and thus much of the meaning and value, excepting to the writer, is lost. To him it brings great satisfaction, joy and blessing; and possibly, although it may humble him to have to acknowledge, that is its greatest function. The impression of a poem that has greatly affected the soul of the author, may be almost negligible on the reader. In the final analysis the important thing is not that a poem shall be published, but that it shall have been written.

It is probably the same with love and friendship and other great emotions. Although one would wish to share all the best with others, still the unpublished " reams and reams," the unrequited love, and the unreciprocate friendship have not been valueless.

With all good wishes, yours sincerely.

Montreal, Jan. 17. MARY E. WILLIAMS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR: With my renewal may I express my hope that The Poetry Society will be able to carry on uninterrupted; for we now more than ever need the kindly voice of the poet.

I feel sure that membership on this side of the Atlantic will hold fast—knowing that during this tragic period the voice of the poet may be silenced—membership interrupted. Again my best wishes and kind regards to all at 33 Portman Square, ELEANOR THORNE, New York.

In sending my subscription for the current year, I should like to express my admiration for the admirable way in which The Poetry Society is carrying on in these very difficult times. Through its enterprise many new and attractive recitals have been given, and others are already announced, and I am convinced these functions must prove very enjoyable to all those privileged to attend them. With best wishes for continual success to the Society's well deserving efforts to promote the love of beautiful poetry, and all it means to the spirit within us, Yours with sincerity of purpose, WALLIS MANSFORD, January 15th.

It is good to note that the quality of THE POETRY REVIEW has not suffered through the war, and I hope that the spirit of poetry itself will not suffer. We cannot afford to lose any spiritual power at this time.—FREDERICK E. SLADE (Harrow).

I have pleasure in forwarding my annual subscription. Poetry is one of the lovely things that remain, and I trust that the Society's membership may increase to bear witness to indestructible things. —MARY E. ARTHY (Cobham).

YOUTH HAS A VOICE

Francis Thompson in one of his poems wrote these lovely lines—

"And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The Angels that were not too tall"

It is with this vision of angel children, their hands stuffed full of clustering stars, ready to throw about with that half-curtailed, thrusting action, so characteristic of child-movement, that some very young writers are introduced in these pages. In harrowing days like these, it is an escape to realize, that life moves on, evolving and maturing irrespective of what we choose to make of its fleeting hours. It is as the voice that "may not be denied" and the wheels of eternal things forever in motion.

The first little writer who brings her gift of stars is Josephine McKinney (6¼ years old) and since her poems have already been broadcasted, some readers may recognize the ones we quote here,

Happiness in Life

Where the Blue Bird sings his song
When the sun goes down to the West;
Just where the old oak tree
Casts its shadows onto the glades;
Where the young ones used to visit
And the rabbits used to play,
Where the squirrels hid all day;
Where the little cabin stood
By the waters of the lake;
And the river runs along
From the hills that tower above it;
Where the kingfisher builds his nest in the rushes—
Oh come and sing with me
And to-night we'll go to the old oak tree.

The Little Gray Mill

The beautiful sun is going to sink,
All the foxgloves are out on the banks of the lane,
That leads to the little farm house;
But still the river so blue
Will roll towards the little gray mill.

Both of these, just a shaft of joy; a fleeting light such as older poets might well covet!

There is the same "knowing about things," the same "living somewhere else instead," in these other poems, that Janet Laker writes at nine years old,—

Streak of Water

Once there was a baby mountain 'midst a lonely plain
Where a baby stream ran tinkling, laughed and sang again.
It trickled on and met a brook and both went on together
A'playing and a'dancing through the marsh and (through the) heather.

They both went on and met a lazy, slowly, slipping river,
They all joined hands and went, a'slowly off together.
No longer laughing but a'thinking of their (wonder) way ;
But by and bye they met a break and all went quite astray.

Fairy Dew

In the beginning of the day
  Within the golden dawn ;
A little fairy there I spied
  Throwing dew upon the lawn.
She looked just like a rain drop
  And when her work was done,
She flew into the air, and—
  Disappeared behind the sun.

The Fairy Player

In the red of evening,
  Upon a gauzy star,
A little elf sat playing,
  Upon a gold guitar.

The fairies fell in love with him,
  But all trooped back to home.
The little elfin's name was Tim,
  But Tim stayed all alone.

Although we have walked along these roadways in our childhood and recognize in these poems experiences of long ago, it is with a sense of newness, as though fresh snow had fallen, that we are enticed to explore it once again. The spangles of the glittering snow like stars about our feet !

Further along on this same roadway is a remarkable poem which John Teague contributes. At twelve years old to be able to write these thoughts, based on the theme of Rupert Brooke's "Great Lover," is something of which to be proud :

These I have loved ; untrodden snow,
A new spring, bubbling from the ground ;
An engine, running fast, or slow ;
The peacock with its raucous sound ;
Dew on the grass and climbing trees ;
A blue-eyed kitten ; Pekingese ;
A mossy path ; a boat's salt spray ;
A camp-fire at the close of day ;
To listen to a heroe's tales ;
Shapes on the sky-line—windmill sails ;
The unexpected meeting of a friend ;
These I have loved, and shall love to the end.

We close this poetic iconograph with the work of a girl of fourteen ; though for its generous thinking, it is to be regretted that space forbids

the inclusion of a poem from Lisbon by Patricia de Mascarenhas. From the little poet who opened this article, to Lalage Pulvertoft whose poem " Ploughing " will close it, readers will be able to gauge for themselves the subtle changes of colour which permeate the sky from the birth of the morning star. We have passed through wonder, possession and speculation, as we travelled the road; and the shape of the poems and the vowel construction has shown us that the future of our greatest art has foundations that will not fail to carry its fine tradition—

It was the time of poets ; our grey clouded spring ;
I walked amid the pastures and heard a ploughboy sing,
I saw the moist brown earth-lines curve over as a wave,
I heard the chink and rattle, I saw the strength they gave.
It was as though I, Godlike, was watching Time turn down
The years, uncaring, as they changed from green to brown.
I wondered if the next one would strike stones yet unseen,
Or, rushing quickly onward, would pass through swift and clean.

E. M. Stephenson.

This New Verse :

E. Curt Peters writes : I am delighted to find bogus " modern verse " so ably shown up in the current issue of The Poetry Review : in your timely and valuable editorial, in Mr. Vandermere Fleming's article and elsewhere. It is high time that sense and beauty return to verse, so that some of it at least may qualify for the rank of poetry. Apropos I append a satirical poem which, I think, sums up the case.

We do not want imitative verse, or uninspired, insipid reflections of the works of past generations ; nor do we want, necessarily, transparently simple verses which the least intelligent reader can master at a first reading. But what we do want is sincerity and beauty, without which no genuine poem can be fashioned. Also, the medium for propaganda (Left Wing or any other) is prose : the newspaper column, the pamphlet, the treatise or the text-book ; but *not* poetry.

Trump up a communistic cornucopia
Which wells with wishful-thinking's wonder-world of bliss :
Promise a proletarian utopia
Where love is liquidated by a comrade's kiss ;
And as piece of bourgeois mind-myopia
Sane men's incomprehension of your drift dismiss.

Then will our pseudo-intellectuals hail you master,
Their mutual-admiration cliques revere your name :
They'll add yours to their countless effigies in plaster
Which ornament the Left Wing of the Hall of Fame. . . .
But Time will prove you but a barren poetaster,
On whose waste land posterity will stake no claim !

POETRY OF TO-DAY

Arthur Row writes: Poetry of To-day, No. 54, affords readers an opportunity of perusing a very earnest output of orthodox and laudable verse-writing. Edith M. Walker presents in a masterly fashion her poems of "Inasmuch" and "Fatalism" and with a truly mellifluous ease she tells the story of "Postscript for Posterity" and "Autumn Evening in the Woods." Phyllis Dulce Warwick puts much customary fine work into her three short poems, of which "The Land Unknown" should be given the greatest credit. Pamela Gordon supplies us with a charming little idyll in "Incident" and there is much true poetry in the four contributions of Rachel Boulton. An ambitious theme dealing with the past and the present wars with Germany is attempted by Marguerite Pollard in "The Eternal Hope and Pentecost of Calamity." Such lines as:

> "They came thro' darkness into quenchless Light
> Where beautiful they surge in waves of song"

should win universal admiration, as should the reverent and sublime touch in the poem's closing passages.

Of the masculine contributors the Reverend T. Pittaway gives us three beautiful sonnets and the most striking longer work, "The Countess Itha" is told with a Keats-like harmony and with an even tread not always found in present-day verse-writers. D. E. C. Tomlin supplies four excellent poems, and in his "Charles Edward" the final lines,

> "'Tis the lost battle that endures for ever
> And beauty broken that outshines a crown,"

carry the philosophy in which the words of the true poet should be frequently enshrined. In the three magnificent poems by Reginald C. Eva "Judas" is the most remarkable and if we cannot all agree with the theme found in this work we can praise the manifest craftsmanship of his presenting it.

A most interesting event for *Poetry of To-day* is that in this number it has the honour to be the first paper to publish an English verse translation of a recently discovered ode by Sappho. H.M. is greatly to be praised for his sympathetic rendering of this wonderful poem, which was found scratched on the fragment of a broken pot; and his verse interpretations of two Odes of Horace Book III are deftly turned and with the same skilful felicity. Perhaps the greatest work in this number is the translation of the *Iliad* Book XXIV (lines 468–804), by O. J. Holland, which tells us some of the tragic happenings following Hector's death in a crude and fearless manner. It is probably far nearer the original in thought and emotion than are the rhyming couplets of Alexander Pope or the even pentameters in blank verse of the fourteenth Earl of Derby. A sonnet on Shakespeare and a longer poem (after Browning) in which the eternal triangle shatters the life-dream of a rustic lover are set down in very commendable fashion by Gerald Souster.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

A large and encouraging entry of serious works. The awards are as follows :—Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ; P. E. C. Duce, York ; Walter Burton, Burton-on-Trent ; Geoffrey Dobbs, Bristol.

I particularly congratulate Mrs. Ormsby, all of whose contributions attain a high standard of dignity and beauty. All the poems concerned are lyrics and all, I think, are of the genuine stuff of poetry, and worthy of our columns.

Of those " Highly Commended " especial mention must be made of Rachel Boulton, Joan Imig, Juliet Peel and C. Woodhouse.

Highly Commended :

Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford ;
Enid W. Barry, London, N ;
E. Radcliffe Binnington, Louth ;
Rachel E. Boulton, Winscombe ;
A. H. Cordwell, Worthing ;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston ;
E. B. W. Chappelow, Bexley ;
N. K. Cruickshank, Liverpool ;
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross ;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove ;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield ;
W. Help, Willington ;
Joan Imig, Highland Park, Illinois;
Arthur Inman, Boston, Mass. ;
Elizabeth Kentish, Westerham ;
Juliet Peel, London, S.W. ;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt.
E. Curt Peters, Chalfort St. Giles ;
Frances Paul, London, S.W. ;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington ;
Brenda Skene, London, S.W. ;
V. S. Staff, London, N. ;
C. Woodhouse, Haslemere.

Commended :

E. J. Bryant, Brightlingsea ;
John Cannings, Melksham ;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood ;
O. C. Dangan, London, N. ;
A. Edward Farmer, London, S.W.;
Con Harvey, Goodmayes ;
J. W. G. Heaven, London, W. ;
Gladys Hurhin, St. Ives, Cornwall;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
W. R. Latham, Chingford ;
P. E. Leaver, Witham ;
G. S. Oddy, Ryde ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Frances Pritchard, Bournemouth ;
Violet Rawnsley ; Anacapri ;
Beresford Richards, Craigavad ;
Joan Sandison, South Croydon ;
Indreni Savundranayagam, Colombo ;
Margery Smith, Nottingham ;
Muriel Symmons, Salcombe ;
D. E. C. Tomlin, Scole ;
F.W., Dulwich ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth ;
M. E. Wise, Brecon.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach " The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by April 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent). It is essential that entrants to this competition be

members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

THE 1900 GROUP has decided that "THE PEACH-TREE" by MURIEL SYMMONS is the best poem submitted for reading and criticism at its 1939 meetings:

Against the wall the Peach-Tree stretched her arms
To the harsh stone her tender finger-tips
(Her budding finger-tips) confiding, laid.
They bound her delicate wrists with woven strips
And left her there, smiling and unafraid.
She trembled little at the gale's alarms;
Beneath the lash of hail, frost's furtive smart,
The frail of form was still the stout of heart.
Rain's silver arrows flashed, and snow might chill—
"I have in me a life ye cannot kill!"

She woke one morn to hear the cuckoo call,
And straining at her bonds she longed to fly
And follow where the magic piping led!
She saw the delicate leaves the elm-shoots shy
Lifted above the sleeping hawthorn's head;
The mantling green upon the larches tall;
The daisied cloak the gay and gallant grass
Spread where the lightsome step of Spring would pass;
And wept because all naked was she seen.
"O when may I put on a robe of green!"

Then came the Sun, with royal panoply,
With pennants waving, and with swords of light,
The birds his buglers and the wind his drum;
And all rejoicing earth acclaimed his might.
In coach of delicate beauty did he come.
The milk-white clouds stepping with dignity.
Out sprang the King, and blazed a blinding path,
Tender and terrible in love and wrath.
To those fair fragile limbs his lips he pressed,
And lo! they blushed, with rosy blossom dressed!

I appreciate the work of The Poetry Society, and would say that it is entirely through studying for the Verse Speaking tests that my rather dormant interest in poetry has been revived, with the result that I have made my first serious attempt at a poem, since school days.

WINIFRED E. BAKER, Bristol.

WHAT PROFITS US?

WHAT profits us
That we can speak across a continent,
And send our words bristling over the skies
And under the ocean bed,
When all our speech is but the argument
Of impotence, and only our cries
Remain, when all is said?

What profits us
That we can bridge the firmament,
Scaling the mountains on our pinions,
Leaping the seas,
When in the air we range a battlement,
And of our wings we make the minions
Of disease?

Our generals drove an army at the foe;
But where they claimed a victory
We found defeat.
Our statesmen met in Caesar's overthrow,
And while they counselled haughtily,
They made retreat.

We set our scholars to probe a mystery;
But where we thought to find a flower
We found a flame.
We sped our ministers to curb a tyranny,
And from the dispute of an angry hour
They brought our shame.

What profits us
That over the wide deserts we can listen,
Catching the moment's tongue
Upon empowered breath,
When all we hear is of a host uprisen
To challenge wrong with wrong;
And all we hear is death?

Johannesburg. LEWIS SOWDEN.

UNWANTED

"YOU do not want me?"
"No," said the world.
"But I love some parts of you,
The beauties of your natural form,
The Love and Art of Man.
Still, do you not want me?"
"No," said the World.
"But I want to help you
And care for you,
I want to create Peace
And Beauty where'er I go,
If you would only give me
In exchange, the Love I need.
Think again, and accept me."
"No," said the World.
"But you are stifling me,
Killing me, and driving me to Death.
Is that what you want?"
"Yes," said the World.
"Why, oh why?"
"I have no use for you," said the World.
"Then I bid you farewell
Uncomplainingly."

FRANCES PAUL.

POETRY

O SPIRIT Who inspirest song, I pray
Lend me thy power that I may shed away
At whiles this manhood; let my spirit be
That which I sing: the bird, the field, the tree.
Give me to share the scant and labouring breath
Of hunted beast, the joy that quickeneth
The blackbird's melody; experience,
By sunny walls, the lizard's somnolence;
As brother enter in where'er the stir
Of being throbs, nor feel a trespasser—
So when I turn, a man, to sing again,
My song shall hold a deeper strain.

REGINALD C. EVA.

THE GHOSTS

(*Achnaba Churchyard, Ardchattan*)

LISTEN to us, oh listen to us . . .
Silence is ours
And the deeper meaning of silence.
Echo will not enter it
In mirth, in grief
(Though these discovered silence in us once).
Darkness is ours
And the deeper meaning of dark.
Candle will not question it,
Nor light of day deride
(Though once in these we were aware of dark).
Loneliness is ours
And the deeper meaning of loneliness
No hand to touch,
No human love
(Though these once taught us loneliness).
Oh souls of restlessness!
Only within this silence that is ours,
This darkness, and this loneliness
Is Peace.

IRENE P. TURNER.

THE HEART HAS WINGS

FRAGILE, delicate, dainty things,
Are wings;
But they carry the dew-laden moth abroad,
From flower to flower—
Such is their power.

Love, too, in its heart has wings—
Unseen, ethereal things;
But a message of hope and love it can send,
On its wings,

From the heart of a friend to a friend,
Any day, any hour;
From the end of the world, to the end,
By their power.

DOROTHY SPROULE.

THE LIFE

THERE'S one thing in life
That's truly life.
The grim dark dismal obvious
And yet hidden truth,
That grey reality—
And the gay romantic land
The secret fantasy and twisted boughs
The blossom falling, falling
The precious stones and flowers and hearts—
Beauty, yes, but artificiality
To escape from the real
That pries and pries too much upon us.
The help of metaphysics and of books
Combines in us a link
In the chain of the two realms
And with a padlock clasps
The two eternally together.
There is the explanation and the life.

JULIET PEEL.

TO A HIVE BEE

O, SURLY drudge of industry,
Whose sullen murmur fills the air,
O, acme of dull energy,
Embodiment of anxious care,
I think your merits overpraised,
Poor, churlish, overworking bee,
Nor can I echo paeans raised
To endless assiduity.

Why overload your cells with gold?
Why slave for such undue supply
And miss the beauties manifold
Seen by the floating butterfly?
But you have bartered all for gain
And store up wealth for wealth's own sake,
While diligently you attain
Your golden hoard—for man to take.

ALBERT E. DEWEY.

THE SONG OF THE CLERK

THEY won't make a clerk of me
if I live to a hundred and ten,
for rivers and trees, and mountains and seas,
and generations of men
who've lived in the wild and beaten the bush
swirl in my veins, a flood
of wild barbaric memory,
that won't let me be a dud
who sits on a stool, contentedly,
and happily wields a pen,
dreaming of tennis and dancing
as fit occupations for men
who belong to the lower middle classes
and wear respectable suits,
adjust their ties, smooth back their hair,
and carefully polish their boots :
I may have to seem to be a clerk,
and stick to my table and pen,
but my mind and heart will be full of dark,
deep cursings of stupid men,
who've made of this world a silly place
fit only for knaves and fools,
a world which knows not light and space,
the magic of silver pools,
shining on open moorlands,
and winking an eye in the sun,
moving the mind to a deep content,
born of a life that's spun
from free things and natural things,
whose race shall never be run.
O, none can control the inner heart
that beats to the rhythm of these !
None can prevent the swift, wild start
of the blood, like a rising of geese,
answering with wings the wingéd call,
from a place, remote, afar.
None can destroy my exultant peace,
serene as a silver star
in the velvet dark of a summer night.

O, none can steal my joy and delight
in sure-moving, natural things,
and though I am kept to a desk and a pen,
my heart is away with the living men.

WALTER DOWDING.

CONQUEST

I DARE not stop to think of you,
I dare not rest the whole day through
Lest pausing for a while might prove
This conscious will less strong than love

That's lost for long and long ago
The rose has fallen and the snow
And heaped it high with red and white
And long the threads of day and night

Have stretched between from then till now
When through each testing day I vow
I will look onward for I know:
Each day that's gone—one less to go

And less the struggle grows when will
Is stronger than emotion till
One night myself my heart shall keep
In perfect singleness of sleep.

PHOEBE RAYNER

THE SUN

DAWN to dusk the golden Sun
Stirs the life in everyone,
All the day his cheerful rays
Warm our blood and light our ways,
Till returning powers of night
Overcome his warmth and light,
Then as day begins to go
Small and cold are we below,
Huge and dark the sky above,
All our warmth and light is love;
So I cry when day is done,
"Lie beside me, Golden One!"

GEOFFREY DOBBS

"L'UN BAISE, L'AUTRE EST BAISÉ"

THERE were so many of you—
One after one you came;
Seeming different, each of you,
And each of you just the same.

Homage I gave to some of you,
Others I gave my love;
You seemed so splendid, all of you,
Distant and far above.

And then you came nearer, all of you,
And were so wonderfully kind!
You seemed quite fond of me, most of you,
And I loved, and you did not mind.

I gave my all to some of you,
And you accepted with grace.
I asked nothing back, from any of you,
But a friendly smile on your face.

You gave me that, all of you,
But that was all you gave.
I was content at first, and you
Were pleased to have me as slave.

But a day came, with all of you,
When I suddenly had the thought
That while I was giving so much to you
You were giving me naught.

And there followed a day, with all of you,
When I found myself aware
That I, so puny compared with you,
Was the bigger of the pair.

And I could not bear it, and fled from you
In ruins I left your throne.
Oh, yes, it was I who broke, not you,
It was my fault, mine alone.

You do not miss me, most of you,
Me, your foolish slave.
But sometimes I think that some of you
Are missing what I gave.

And I do not miss you, any of you—
I go on laughing and living.
But often, now there are none of you,
I miss my giving.

F. J. WOODWARD

I WALK ALONE

I WALK alone now I am old
Though once fond arms were wont to fold
Me close, when I was young and fair,
To-day not one is left to care
Because my locks have lost their gold.

I long for you to have and hold
But you have long lain in the mould
And no one takes your place, my dear,
I walk alone.

I find the world so very cold
Not as in days when love was bold,
For we were young and you were there,
And we found gladness everywhere;
But since the day the church bells tolled,
I walk alone.

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS.

THE CONQUEROR

HE sought through life for joy; but all in vain,
Until that mis-named shadow, known as pain
Conquered the thinner darkness of the night,
And reached the very edge of "Out-of-sight,"
Where, through the infinite, and just too far
For shadeless human eyes, he saw a star.

IËRNE ORMSBY

SYMBOLISM VERSUS REALISM

THE admirable article on Christopher Brennan, the Australian poet, in the March-April number of THE POETRY REVIEW, provokes thought. The author shows clearly how the Symbolist theories of Mallarmé influenced Brennan, supported by some ideas of a few of the German Romantics; and it is at least interesting to note the development of an English-speaking poet's mind and expression under such an urge.

Presumably, the rise of ideals such as Symbolism and other "isms" was inevitable, for it is in the nature of man never to rest content with the perfection of one kind of achievement. He is so full of hope, and surging with cross-current impulses, that he must experiment in ever new forms, must try his wings in ever new flights, and in consequence the cross-currents catch him, and hurl him, willy-nilly, into the empyrean, or dash him to earth with a bump which temporarily knocks both the breath and the ideal out of him.

This is true of poetry, and it is remarkable that an age of giants is followed by an age of both imitators and rebels. The imitators are inevitably but hangers-on, while the pigmy rebels try to rise above the heads of the giants, only to find themselves in a strange sphere which is not wholly intelligible to the human mind. The excitement of such discovery is like unwonted wine. In place of the balanced views and modes of expression of the giants are spumed forth frothings and theorizings which make the mind of the plain man whirl, so that he feels the atmosphere of the nightmare upon him.

It is not suggested, however, that Symbolism is quite as bad as that. It is true that symbolism, in the general sense. plays a great part in life and in art. It is a pleasant seasoning in the fare of beauty, like the high lights in a picture, like imitative passages in music, like a shaft of sunlight through a traceried window. Symbols the human mind must have, for it is made that way; and consequently the expression of life and of beauty requires symbols to emphasize the vital points.

But Symbolism in the special sense, that of Mallarmé and other Symbolist poets, is a different matter. Here we have something which, instead of flashing beams of light into a dark world, projects a cloud of gloom and obscurity into the light realms of the poetic ideal. Its means are "suggestion" and subtle allusiveness, like shrouding the fairy prince in the cloak of the villain. The so-called "suggestion" is often unsuggestive, unless indeed it suggest a Scotch mist, or a cloud veiling the hill-top. Plain statement is anathema to the Symbolist. According to Mallarmé, as the author of the article on Brennan tells us, "the literature of statement is merely a species of reporting, and as such he holds it in very low esteem."

Now this is all very well, but no one wants poetry put into the language of the newspaper report. There could be no poetry that way. But how have our greatest poets written their greatest poetry? On the whole—with the aid of comprehensible symbolism, with a small "s"—remarkably lucidly.

Now this is where Brennan, the Australian Symbolist, comes in. According to the quotations from his work given in THE POETRY REVIEW article, the effect on the mind is kaleidoscopic. It is as though an artist had gone Symbolist in his sleep, and had worked out his dreams by splashing about with vivid colours on a canvas.

The reader starts to read quite hopefully, for he has a clue, and the path seems plain; but after a few lines he finds himself in a morass. He stops and goes back to remind himself of the clue, and thinks hard, but cannot connect the beginning with the continuation. He casts his eye and mind forward for elucidation, sees flashes of light, and short stretches of path here and there, but no apparent cohesion. There is admittedly suggestion and allusiveness dotted about in the lines, but the surroundings seem only the more obscure.

It seems, therefore, that the very object of "suggestion" and Symbolism is defeated in such a form of expression. The human brain, being human, looks, in "suggestion," for the something suggested; and if a symbol is used, it is

useless and meaningless until the truth which the symbol represents is known.

Another theory which Brennan has absorbed and upon which he works is that of the German Romantics mentioned in the article. The artist must aim, according to them, at never giving the impression of having achieved a fully finished work. On the contrary, their expression should seem to merely hold out hope of progress towards perfection.

This idea, again, seems to be culled from that strange region above the heads of the giants to which the German Romantics and their followers have made their experimental flights. Perhaps these experiments have a certain value in their effect on those who have remained with the giants. Clear away the veil of Symbolism and the mountain peaks shine clear in the sun, in all their grandeur.

How grand those giants are! So mighty, and yet so intimately beautiful that one forgets all about Mallarmé and all the Symbolists and faddists.

Now the reasons for the grandeur of the giants and the comparative unsatisfactoriness of these others must be known to all real lovers of poetry. Surely the first reason is lucidity, in spite of the commonplaceness of clear statement. The human mind being what it is, the need for directness of expression, even though it be sublimated, is apparent. It is the sublimation of direct statement, partly through the medium of readily apprehended symbols, which makes the giant thinkers and seers into giant poets.

Again, by reason of the constitution of the human mind, language well used is in itself beautiful, not only musically, but in all its historic associations; and high thought expressed in high language makes all that is finest in literature.

Take as an example that transcendental poem, Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*. There surely is direct statement, easily apprehended intellectually, quite apart from its magic poetic content. There is no need in such a work of art for the vagaries of suggestion and cloudy allusiveness. Neither the nightingale, nor its song, nor its surroundings, nor the

thoughts awakened in the poet's soul can gain the least advantage from the avowed introduction of obscurity.

> "O for a beaker full of the warm south,
> Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
> With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
> And purple stained mouth;
> That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
> And with thee fade away into the forest dim."

No obscurity there, and yet superb poetry. Can any of the quoted specimens of Brennan's writing come within miles of it?

The main contention here is that language, whether in poetry, in prose, or in individual words is a spiritual power, far more intensely significant and beautiful than we commonly realize. We use language every day, and we debase it every day, for we forget that it has been evolved as the most perfect human expression of a mind akin to the divine.

It might be a good exercise to read some of the finest poetry, say once a week, in order to raise the mind into the atmosphere of beautiful language, and then spend an hour with a dictionary and Roget's Thesaurus, revelling in the association of words and their origns, and their effects one upon another. It is like studying the shades of expression in an ideal interpretation of a great piece of music.

True symbolism consists largely in the true associations of words, whereas the Symbolism of the Symbolists disperses these associations in fog.

It must be said here that, in order to appreciate to the full the intense beauty of poetic direct statement, emotion must be allowed to have sway; for emotion is a state which permits exceptional depth of insight. Those who scorn emotion, and rear themselves upon a proud intellectualism, miss more than they can afford to lose.

The emotion, however, must not be of the cheap, sensational variety. It must be a true emotion of the soul, producing forgetfulness of the body and the claims of the lower strata of life—a state of soul in which the link with the Origin of all beauty becomes convincingly clear. Actually all creation is a part of the Creator, for it is a manifested concept in the mind of God; but of course the more purely spirit-

ual aspects of life are the higher and the more satisfying.

All art is spiritual, and words therefore, as the essentials of the art of poetry, are spiritual in themselves. Therefore the great poets used them lucidly, directly, and without any attempt to cloud their meaning.

Think of the intensity behind the rightly associated words in Gray's *Elegy;* the direct statement, and yet beautiful picture conveyed in any stanza of Byron's *Elegy on Newstead Abbey*, as for instance:

> "A thousand songs on tuneful echo float,
> Unwonted foliage mantles o'er the trees;
> And hark! the horns proclaim a mellow note,
> The hunter's cry hangs lengthening on the breeze."

Read any stanza of the same poet's *Childe Harold;* innumerable passages of Shelley, Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Swinburne and others. Think of the exact description of Shelley's skylark, the "profuse strains of unpremeditated art"; of Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, where the tide is so directly and exactly described as being "too full for sound or foam."

The intensity is there, the magic of beauty is there, the highest poetry is there in these works of the giants, and they use Realism, not Symbolism; for reality is the ultimate Reality of the Infinite and Eternal.

Real expression then is the essential content of real poetry, and one asks, "Can Brennan and writers of the Symbolist and other faddist schools be considered good poets?"

FREDERICK E. SLADE.

A PRAYER AND A PROMISE

GIVE me swift hands to sow the seed,
Firm feet to tread the soil,
Courageous knees and lips to plead
A blessing on my toil—
And nothing shall disturb my joy,
No disillusion stale,
Nor triviality destroy,
The wonder of my tale!

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

SUBMARINE

IT is dark under the water
And only fishes know
The lights that come and go,
The phosphorescent gleam
Beneath the Ocean stream—
It is dark under the water.

It is still under the water
The shapes that move and pass
Through swaying water-grass,
The fins that stir and wave
Are silent as the grave—
It is still under the water.

It is cold under the water
No hearts for passion's beat,
No breath, no stir, no heat,
But eyes as clear as glass
Gaze dumbly as they pass—
It is cold under the water.

It is lonely under the water
And you that lie within
The dim shape girded in
Are silent, dark and cold,
The young lie with the old,
It is lonely under the water.

LETTICE HAFFENDEN.

CONTRASTS

I SAW pale phosphorus in the woods
That aped the light of day,
Will o' the Wisp upon the marsh,
A pallor of decay.

Red of the sunset, black of night,
How shall the eye find truth?
The ashleaf buds are black with life,
The oak buds red with youth.

G. E. O. MULLINS.

AFTERWARDS

HERE is the call, and I must go
Leaving my chosen way of life,
And plunge into the bitter strife;
For precious things are threatened, so
I shall not shirk what service brings.
But now my hands must train, until
They learn to fight, and fight to kill—
These hands that love all living things.
If I survive when war is won,
May I forget what I have done.

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

REQUIEM

NOW has the hallowed hour of death descended,
And the long evening lulls her to its rest;
In loveliness the quiet hands are blended
On the unfevered breast.

Vestured in silence and the peace of dreaming,
Pale naiads of the dusk are bearing her
Beyond the tides of Lethe, darkly gleaming,
Where winds have ceased to stir.

Where sombre-hued, the twilit shadows falling,
Darken the waters of the soundless sea;
While fainter grows the voice of Ceres calling
The lost Persephone.

And paler blows the ravelled rose forsaken,
Across the moon-white fields of asphodel;
Wan wraiths of beauty that the gods have taken,
Breathing their long farewell.

Now has the hallowed hour of death descended,
And the hushed evening lulls her to its rest;
In loveliness the quiet hands are blended
On the unfevered breast.

Winnipeg. IRENE CHAPMAN BENSON.

IN A LONELY PLACE

THE steep hill leans against the sky,
It seems a stairway climbing up
Out of the valley's emerald cup
To a fantastic world on high,
Where citadels and minarets,
And bastions and parapets
Are built of piled-up cumuli,
Round cobalt lakes, within whose deeps
The summer sleeps.

Soft shadows slip across the land,
The pasture-land between the hills,
Vague as the sadnesses which brood
Over unbroken solitude.
A breathing, scented silence fills
The spreading miles, with purple spanned,
Where, in a vast encircling band
The great curve of the world is seen
In looming splendours on the green.

The only sounds that shock the air
Come from a lonely quarry, where
The steep hill leans against the sky.
Within its echoing gallery
A solitary worker breaks
Bushels of stones, and never takes
Eyes from the hammer in his hand.

With half a Kingdom at his feet,
A strange fantastic world on high,
He, with indifference complete,
And introspective eye,
Heeds not the land, for which, in years gone by,
A flaming Patriot—he longed to die!
But now, instead,
Aged and poor, all glorious dreams a lie—
All inspiration dead—
Breaks quarry-stones, to earn his daily bread.

MARGARET E. STRINGER,

FREDERICK GEORGE LEE:

A FORGOTTEN VICTORIAN POET

THE pages of any clerical directory teem with minor religious poets and particularly is this true of those of the nineteenth century. The majority of these publications find their way to a " twopenny box " in the Faringdon Road whence, after various apathetic handlings, they eventually move on to such places as will melt them into pulp and thus provide the kindest method of commemorating their authors' memories and conserving the greater peace of posterity. In spite, however, of the unfortunate habits of these ecclesiastical versifiers, the nineteenth century had several minor religious poets of considerable merit. Such, for example, were Aubrey de Vere, R. S Hawker, Dolben, H. N. Oxenham and the subject of this article, Frederick George Lee.

The pen was as natural to Lee's hand as the bow to that of the archer and his works cover twenty-one pages of the catalogue in the British Museum and this in addition to the Editorship of at least six different periodicals at various times and articles and stray verses innumerable.

Before introducing Lee's works it will be well to consider a few of the general characteristics of his poetry. Like Matthew Arnold Lee was beset with the transience of earthly things, but unlike Arnold he early found the Eternal and clung to it. This does not mean that he was a mystical poet in the same way as, for instance, Francis Thompson. It is, rather, that in his poetry the pervasive activity of God is taken for granted and he is concerned rather with its results than with the mystic's search of the Beatific Vision.

Lee's first book of poems was published in 1850, when he was eighteen and just going up to Oxford, and several of the poems had been written some years before. The work showed several youthful indiscretions which were remedied in the second edition published four years later. One characteristic of these poems was the amount of learning they displayed in one so young and they had much sweetness of feeling. Even at this early date there is

discernible in some of the poems a spirit of melancholy which, while never present in his prose writings, is seldom far absent from Lee's poetry. An example of this melancholy is seen in his little poem " Grief " :

I sit and muse on happier days,
When hours were short, and love was deep ;
I watch the slanting Autumn rays,
And oh I could—but cannot—weep :

For there are griefs too deep for tears,
And there are joys too great for smiles :
While Hope would point to future years,
And though we would not—still beguiles.

Or the sweet little poem " Autumn and Winter " :

She knelt below the Holy Rood,
Pure as the lily fair,
With clasped hands and heaven-turned eye,
In deep and earnest prayer ;
The evening sun came streaming up
The long grey pillar'd aisle,
Like the last sweet glance of a holy Saint,
Or a dying Martyr's smile.

I saw her again when the Spring had passed,
And Autumn's sunshine gleamed,
She lay on a couch with a placid look,
And her face like an Angel's seemed,—
Her face, like an Angel's carved in stone,
Or a dream-wrought face at night,
Seemed as if Heaven were all around,
And over her beamed its light.

I never saw her again. One morn
As I look'd in the chancel fair,
The tapers gleamed and the organ pealed,
And the priests were singing a prayer,—
The priests were singing a holy prayer,
Which up to Heaven arose,
While the choristers sang, I knelt to ask
Of God, her soul's repose.

In 1854, after two unsuccessful attempts, Lee won the Newdigate Prize by a poem on *The Martyrs of Vienne and Lyons* written in blank verse in two days and part of a night. The poem created a minor sensation and was

acclaimed one of the finest Newdigates ever delivered. The poem abounded in gems not generally met with in Newdigates and it opened with a fine pictorial passage which Lee's friend, R. S. Hawker, described as "a landscape by Guido if he ever painted one".

> Quivering his golden shafts, the
> Sun reposed
> On clouds of purple. Slowly from the East,
> Mantled in sable garb,—upon her brow
> A silver crescent caught the sun's last gleam—
> Evening came up; while stars and planets bright,
> Like scattered jasmine flowers upon a stream,
> Were clustering in the dark blue vault of Heaven.

His description of an angel with "gold-fringed pinions, dyed with rainbow hues," called forth all Hawker's ire and his words, contained in a private letter to Lee, are too good to be forgotten: "Angels have no wings, not a single feather. . . . Wings moreover are to me destructive of all poetry of motion from place to place. They imply effort. The angels glide on the chariots and horses of their own desires. One in Syria is fain to be in Egypt and immediately is there."

The portraiture of the Church is singularly graphic and good:

> "... But still methought the Church,
> In power divine and majesty supreme,
> Walked forth through lands, and nations heard her voice,
> Owning her sway.
> Then, signed with Jesu's sign,
> Ten thousand forms flocked to her lowly ranks,—
> Kings, nobles, poets, princes, senators,
> Swelling her triumph, as She walked erect
> Across the desert of this sinful world;
> And upward tuneful rose through starry space
> Her songs of praise to God ..."

The Martyrs of Vienne and Lyons had the unusual distinction for a Newdigate of passing through five editions.

Four years later, amid many other literary efforts, Lee published *Petronilla and other Poems*. This collection of poems was a great improvement on the earlier one and the *Oxford Journal* asserted that "many of the descriptive pieces

may well bear comparison for beauty and power with almost any of the writings of the poets of our time." These poems show a particular skill in blending faithful descriptions of nature with illustrations of things supernatural, which never seem brought in to teach a lesson, but are always in true harmony with the context. Lee was at heart a true mediaevalist and he grew more and more disturbed as the nineteenth century advanced and even in poems written as early as 1858 we find him looking wistfully back at days that are past and bewailing his lost childhood when he had no need to bother with the ever-increasing hurry of a modernizing world:

> A narrow world was all I knew,
> Joys crowding, hopes and fears,
> Life seemed an endless spring-time then,
> With April shower-like tears,
> But sorrows have come, all spectre-like,
> With the shorter deepening years.

In 1866 appeared *The King's Highway and other Poems* and by this time his poetical reputation was already deservedly high. In many ways the poem was below the standard of the others. The principal poem, *The King's Highway*, is long, often obscure and the grammatical construction by no means easy, while it abounds in long elaborated sentences, whose meaning it requires some pains to unravel. On the other hand, it shows a far greater mastery over the mechanism of verse and displays an imagery which is apt and pleasing and the rhythm is good and musical. Better than the longer poem are the shorter ones which the book contains and particularly the hymns. Lee preferred his longer and more pretentious poems and probably esteemed his hymns as of little worth and yet it is in his hymns that we see Lee as the true poet, for in his hymns he sang not to himself but to God. But public taste, though far from infallible, is a fairly safe test of poetry of this type and *The King's Highway* went through two large editions in a short time and, indeed, no volume of Lee's poems went into less than two editions except a privately printed collection at the end of his life.

The next volume to appear, in 1874, was *The Bells of Botteville Tower*, A Christmas Story in Verse, to which were added some twelve other poems. In many respects this is the most satisfactory of Lee's narrative poems. He moves from century to century with great ease and rapidity tracing the sad history of a Cornish family and is able to give his mediaevalism full play:

> Here stands a tower, grey with the grey of age,
> And hoar with grasp of stern antiquity,
> By the sea-marge alone and solitary.
> Its shadows move athwart a churchyard green
> Of more than fourteen changing centuries.

Wistfully he looks back to the time when all life was sanctified under the protection of the undivided Church and the bells of Botteville held their ancient sway:

> When these bells peal at beauteous break of Day,
> And bid the faithful to the Sacrifice,
> Or thrice ring forth a blessed Angelus,
> Or warn the hale of sick and dying souls,
> Or chime at even when Day's light fades out,
> Drive far all demons and the powers of air;
> Bid Satan and his servants flee away;
> Let tempests cease, and wars be stilled to calm.

Or again:

> The Sanctus-bell told of the work begun
> Within the Church's thronged and hallowed walls;
> A joyous peal declared the mystery wrought;
> The chants that floated through an open door
> Proclaimed anew the joys of Bethlehem.
> Silence awhile reigned. . . .
>
> . . . Then once more the Bells
> Pealed over moor and hill and rock and sea,
> And told a glad tale, ever new yet old,
> Of balm for wounded hearts and grace for all,
> Of broken links rejoined on Heaven's floor,
> Of light to guide the weary wanderer Home,—
> For Mary's Babe was born at Bethlehem.

Then came the Reformation which Lee hated as breaking the Unity of Christendom and the Squire of Botteville

> No more God's servant, but the King's

plundered and robbed the Church and

> The curse lay heavily on Botteville Tower,
> And all who knew it as their earthly home.

This poem shows Lee at his best and handling the type of subject with which he was most at home and was, as someone said at the time, "a really poetical expression both of himself and his subject." The poem was a long one of nearly 1500 lines and quotation cannot do it justice. It deserves to be ranked with the great narrative poems of the English language and should certainly be reprinted.

The following year, 1875, Lee's friend Hawker died on the Feast of the Assumption and Lee's lines written then and privately circulated, deserve repetition here in full.

ON THE DEATH OF A POET-PRIEST

Not where th'Atlantic sighs upon the shore
Of the most sacred Station of a Saint;—
Not where uprises Ocean's ceaseless plaint
Or swells its fury to tempestuous roar;
Not near God's Acre, which he loved so well,
Where sunbeams creep athwart Morwenna's shrine,
Where Sacrament is served, and signs divine
Speak of a time when sea shall no more swell;[1]
But near the confines of his boyhood's home,
(Now work is done and stormy skies grow black,
Changes too rude; more dangerous the track;)
Came the short summons of his Master, "Come,
O faithful servant blest." That Garden grows
Heaven-sunned the Mystic, Sharon's blood-red Rose.

II

So, on the day when Blessed Mary slept,
But lived, by grace encircling Her, to stand
In golden vesture, Queen, at God's Right Hand,
Her client likewise closed his eyes. Friends wept,
Because of separation, round his bed;
Then joyed, with deepening thankfulness, that he
Should pass the waves of Earth's sore-troubled sea
With pleading Mother's smile above him shed.
Fret not. Our inn, the Church, hath many rooms diverse,
He passed from one to another here.[2] Then on

[1] The reference is to the fact that Hawker was for forty-one years Vicar of Morwenstow on the rocky coast of North Cornwall.

[2] Hawker was received into the Roman Church on his death-bed.

Where angel-guardians, sheltering, wait to guide
God's servants to the Valley's other side,
Scaring all daemons, smit with eternal curse,
To their dark lairs. Soon upward towards God's Throne.

Shortly afterwards Lee published a biography of Hawker in which he showed himself a competent critic of poetry although, as is natural in a biographer, Hawker's less fortunate poems are ignored.

About this time, too, Lee edited a book of religious verse under the title of *Lyrics of Light and Life* which contained original contributions of, among others, Newman, Aubrey de Vere, Christina Rossetti, Dolben and four original poems of his own. Of the last, a short poem on St. Mark's, Venice, which Lee had just visited at a crisis in his life, is particularly good. Lee was strongly impressed with the gloriously mosaicked Basilica of St. Mark:

A stately palace of the Triune God
A mystic sanctuary of gloom and gleam—

as he calls it. He sees the wondrous sight and cries as he departs:

In peace, Lord, may Thy Servant now depart,
My wondering eyes have seen this heavenly sight,
And I would choose henceforth the better part:
Grant it, O Christ, whene'er draws on the Night,
After Earth's toil and moil, to where is light,
Lord, may Thy servant then in peace depart.

From this time onward Lee's output of poetry was considerably diminished. He had in 1867 been appointed Vicar of a populous slum parish and was now increasingly occupied with ecclesiastical controversy of one sort and another. In spite of this he published twenty-one more prose works and one small volume of poetry—in many ways quite his best—as well as several stray verses mainly in the pages of the American periodical *Ave Maria*.

One poem, *All Souls Day*, written in 1892 and published in a Roman Catholic magazine, *The Poor Souls' Friend*, particularly deserves to be remembered. It is too long to quote in full but the first and last verses are here given. He opens:

In Autumn and Winter they passed—when the flow'rets were dying,
Or dead, by the ways they had wandered alongside of yore,
Little heeding the hours then so brief and the months swiftly flying—
Towards a troublesome ocean which one day shall swell nevermore.

And the last verse is particularly touching :

So when the Chalice of Blood is uplifted, in prayers of November,
When the grey fields are barren and over us earth's deepest gloom,
Refresh, Lord, the souls we have lost and in pity remember
A Tree, a pierc'd Heart, and in mercy a Bodyless Tomb.

In the later poems the spirit of melancholy becomes far more marked. Lee hated change and the rapid changes of the latter half of the last century made him the more unhappy the older he grew and, moreover, he had generally made friends with men some years older than himself and as these died one by one he began to feel left alone in a world he little understood and that took little trouble to understand him. His poem *On Re-visiting Oxford* is typical of his feelings :

I went again, where Oxford's towers and spires
Shoot up amid the weeds where Isis winds,
To see old scenes and hear the sounds of yore,
And mark the changes of these later years.
Just as of old the sunshine fell, the streams
Murmured calm music by the willow's shade.
The old familiar chimes to sun and star
Spoke of days gone, as they did speak of yore.
As each year passed, since these feet trod those streets
As each change came and bore fresh changes too,
As many voices known and hushed in sleep,
As many hearts beat lovingly no more,
I prayed, when meeting past with present, now—
Lord, any place, the lowest, where no change comes.

The last volume of poetry was privately printed in 1899 and entitled *De Profundis*. Some of the poems had already appeared in *Ave Maria* and elsewhere and some appeared here for the first, and last, time. The opening poem, *Towards the River*, is the sad cry of a lonely old man who cannot but feel that much of his life's work has been in vain and who, after a life of singular activity, lives in a forced and irksome retirement. But often the poet writes in sadness his best poetry and such was the case with Lee.

I am lonely in my journey towards the River,
Many friends and faces failing day by day;
Brightest joys of childhood granted by their Giver
Seem all scattered, as I wander on my way.

I am lonely in my journey towards the River,
Where the sunshine fell of old, now looms the cloud;
Oft I cry within me—Lord who shall deliver
From this body's death, the churchyard and the shroud?

I am lonely in my journey towards the River,
Sunshine falls in golden splendour as I go;
Yet the bitter winds of winter make me shiver,
As I tramp with weary footsteps through the snow.

Yet there is his Christian faith to step in and save him from the despair of his natural self, so that he can say:

Thus, though lonely in my journey towards the River,
Straining eye and clouding sight shall strain no more;
Let me know the Son of Mary to deliver,
With His mercy and His welcome on the shore.

De Profundis was Lee's last volume though he did publish two poems the following year, *Earth and Heaven*, which appeared in *Ave Maria* and *Mount St. Mary*, which he printed privately in a two-page brochure. *Earth and Heaven* is a sweet and tender little poem. We quote the first stanza:

The silver lake is sleeping
Its rippling waves at rest;
The stars, their watches keeping,
Are mirrored on its breast,
The harvest-moon uncreeping
Behind the mountain's crest.

One of the most notable characteristics of Lee's writing, both in poetry and prose, was his eye for colour. The passage which opens his Prize Poem and which we have quoted is almost overbearingly colourful. There is as much colour in his poems as, for example, in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. Look, for instance, at the opening lines of his poem *Fourteen Years Ago*, published in *Petronilla and other Poems*:

Blue and black transparently
Out of the glare of the mounted sun,
Now do the waters evenly lie,

And the lank weeds point to the bright blue sky,
With orange in place of dun.
Clear and sharp transparently
Motionless lie the weeds,
In and out below the dark fish swim
In curve and circle up to the brim,
Moving the crispy reeds.

Or again, in his *Mount St. Mary :*

Around, a rich green pasture, where the kine,
Lowing, or silent, pass obedient lives,
Tended by simple maid or faithful hind ;
Where the lambs bleat in Springtime and the folds
Stand thick with corn in autumn-purples glow,
Ere gleaners glean the stalks of ripened wheat
O'er which mists weep, and drifting weep anew,
While shadows deepen with the dying year.

There is such an amazing power of suggesting colour indirectly to our minds. In those last lines but two colours are mentioned specifically and yet the scene stands out as if painted by Turner. A shimmering light is always a delight to him and is painted many times in his poetry, for example : his poem on Kirkstall Abbey, Yorkshire, written when he was twenty-one and published in the second edition of his *Poems :*

It stood out boldly 'gainst the deep blue sky,
The moon slow sailing amid drifting clouds.
And silvering the cold grey stones with shafts
Of soft unearthly brightness cast athwart
The massive wall, broad arch and slender pier.

Or listen to this glorious riot of colour from the Prize Poem :

And onwards still wound tortuous silver veins
Through rich green valleys, resonant at morn
With notes of praise from birds of brightest hue
That quivered in the sunshine, as they hung
Beneath a sky—one molten mass of gold !
Through valleys gay, at Noontide musical
With happy song from light and joyous hearts
That willing toiled in vineyards, rich with fruit,
Bright as the gardens of Hesperides.

As will have been seen, Lee's poems show a great love of

natural scenery, but he cannot in any true sense be called a nature poet—nature was for him but the *accidens* of which the soul of man in its relation to the Creator was the *substantia*.

To-day, not one of Lee's poems, so far as we can ascertain, is in print either separately or in an anthology and so there are forgotten many gems of poetry well worthy of preservation and remembrance. As in all poets of this type there is dross mingled with the gold but a selection of Lee's poems might with profit to all be edited and published to-day. At the end of his life he was compared as a poet with Cardinal Newman and while as a generalization the comparison is an exaggeration there are poems of Lee's which will bear comparison with any of Newman's though, as Mr. Lewis May most truly points out, Newman's real poetry is to be found, " not in his metrical compositions . . . but in his prose."[1] With the prose of Newman nothing that Lee wrote can bear comparison ; with the " metrical compositions " he can and does.

[1] *Cardinal Newman*, p. 235 (1936 ed.)

HENRY R. T. BRANDRETH.

TO MY GRANDCHILD

CHILD of my child, who am myself a child
Of children in a flow of streams which rise
In far mysterious regions where the eyes
Of knowledge fail, and are by dreams beguiled :
Dreams of a garden where two lovers smiled
Naked, unshamed, of good and ill unwise,
Who dared to know the choice to exercise,
And, knowing, were from paradise exiled.

So runs the fable true. To rise they fell.
How else were progress from the brute to man ?
Thou hast their heritage from lowliest cell
To infant innocence ; then will-free strife.
Of flesh with spirit, till through death to life
Again immortal, whence all streams began.

W. HELP.

SACRED AND PROFANE DELIGHT

I built an Earth, I built a Sky,
I built the substance of a dream
Of beauty fashioned to defy
The fraud of transient joys that seem
To fill a void, to pass an hour
But leave us lonely with regret
To turn from every withered flower
That Joy reported, Sorrow met.

But from my spiritual retreat
Where music and the arts were glad
I fled with anger to some street
Where skies were dark, and men were sad,
And laughed in wholesome mud and mire,
And clasped the hands of those in pain :
Till from their hearts poured out a fire
That built my world more bright again.

CHARLES WOODHOUSE.

ON HEARING A PRELUDE OF CHOPIN

PIANO rain soft trills of sound
Out of wild heights pianissimo ;
Thy sound more intimate than touch
And vivace allegretto to the coffined ground,
A visionary spate thy winds do blow
On meadows cold lilies hedge and much
Spare trees that bend to storms and such,

No sound makes me feel, as rain,
Pouring sources of the skies, my heart
As violins stream and soar, soars too
Fast to the thunder cloud, Valkeries domain,
In wind wet skies thy Autumn part
Of lives, rich with rain-love, on dying too
Piano pianissimo sound when thoughts are few.

MARK WILDING.

OXFORD POETRY AND DISILLUSIONMENT : II

I NOW come to three isolated poets, isolated in the sense that they belonged to the Howarth period but were not of it, isolated too in the fact that they were entirely individual.

Of these John Maxwell is the least important but the most charming. A young actor at the Oxford Playhouse, it is just that his two most delightful poems should be *The Actress* and *After the Play*. The final lines of the latter (in memory of a party) give an idea of his style.

> The dusty spotlight as it falls
> Gilds even Betty's overalls,
> And gives the common stage we see
> Dramatic unreality.
> And Caroline with drowsy hair
> Sits laughing at the footlights there.

At the moment he is concentrating on a book of epigrams. Here is one to Mr. Richard Aldington :

> As Richard Aldington took off his vest
> He thanked his God that he was not repressed.

Second of these poets is Norman Bradshaw. His poetry is built up around his own loneliness. He describes this in *Not thus we die*.

> To children loneliness is not so near.
> for loneliness must follow individual realisation ;
> for them the candle going out, the coat gibbering from the door,
> but not the knowledge of the body's isolation.

And it is this, his own isolation from the world around him that he feels most deeply. But his importance is that he is the only living poet to my knowledge capable of using finely and effectively the Middle English alliterative line, the line of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Piers Plowman* So in *Common Epitaph* he describes his life :

> Born a boy on the ebb of battle
> In a land of loneliness where loving was dead.

Further on there is the lyrical splendour of

> O a river rustling with rumour of rain,
> And O a girl gleaming with a glimpse of god,
> And the gold glory when gorse is glad.

His best poem in this manner *Aucassin* deserves to be quoted in full :

No message for me in the mild chancel,
No helping hand in the hope of heaven ;
For if it is true as they tell, I am torn from myself,
Linked with love forever, for all my failure,
Chained by charity, given my charter from despair.

And if fairy-tale as we fear, then farewell all,
For hell cannot hold heavier hurt than this,
To grasp for the golden, the vair and the grey,
And from the shittened shambles see the shape of heaven.
For in hell or in hades or in hollow sheol,
I shall be free and fostered as at my own fire,
Loosened from love-making, given my release from hope.

I bequeath this question until my quietus,
But here in the hollowness of heart there is no hearing ;
I am here and here and cannot go hence,
I am fastened to my failings, and bedfellow to my imagination,
Hinged to my hankerings and my hidden plans.

I am assigned to shiver for the softness of shoulders,
And the inner arm where the breast arches,
And the long fingers laid careless
On the uncoiffured curls kissed by the wind.

I have an appointment with anxiety every half day,
And a room for restlessness reserved in my hotel,
And a meeting place in my memory for all high moments,
For Pansy the peerless, the perfect rose,
For Jean, for Valma vivid at Veules,
Elaine at Islip in the second summer,
And elusive Gabrielle and her grey glance.

Perfect passion and perfect purity, this is my paradox,
Wisdom and innocence in one woman,
The necessity of a saviour sunk in her breast,
Terrestrial atonement taught by her glance,
And the power and the glory under a girl's gown.

I now come to one of the most individual poets in this survey, namely Alan Rook. He is a tall, handsome, and rather gaunt young man of about twenty-nine, with an aristocratic air about him that leads one to suspect that he is perhaps an Austrian Archduke or a lost Hapsburg. He

came to Oxford only after a successful career both in the army and in business. He immediately became celebrated for the literary salons and parties that he held with his uncle Gian St. John in their beautifully furnished house in St. Aldates. During his first three years he wrote occasional poems, but it was not until his fourth and last year with the publication of " Songs from a Cherry Tree " that he really showed of how much he was capable. The ten poems to the Cherry Tree, which comprise half this book, open with fine lyrical rhythm :

> All winter long you lay dreaming,
> gray against gray stone, of summer
> enduring the Christmas of candles and holly, the coming
> of the young year crowned like a lover.

He takes his tree as a symbol of beauty and simplicity, a thing that lives successfully because devoid of all senseless ambition and vicious desires. So his moral is

> What matter lord or subject ? As this tree
> let us put off this sham formality,
> put on intrinsic beauty all our own.

Thus when mankind in humility and love has aspired beyond materialism to " the dream beyond the reach of the machine," then life will endure leisurely and happily, each person bearing within himself his own " promise of immortality after the harvest." The remaining nine poems in the book are on much the same theme as this, but perhaps slighter. The final poem *Oh I could Praise* bears comparison with Drayton's magnificent sonnet *Since there's no help.*

Since the publication of his book Alan Rook has published a few poems in magazines. *For a New Friend*, one of his best shorter poems, touches upon those memories of childhood which " like music touch the heart." Memory is indeed an important factor in the writing of Rook, and his poems have all the dream-like stateliness of this insubstantial mist that clings about the brain and the heart. His finest poem *Night in the Chilterns*, a tremendous and passionate love poem that moves along like a vast Armada or a Coronation Procession down Whitehall, is too long to quote in full ; but I will content myself with the third

section only, in which thought and inspiration reach to a climax :

> The evening now, a strumpet laden with jewels,
> peers through the branches ; and her memories
> are stars in the darkness of oblivion.
> Look back ! Look back ! Recall before we forget.
>
> Look back on cities of childhood, the joy and the living
> wonder of discovery, nights of rest,
> or journeying with Lancelot searching
> for the witch, the enchanter, knowledge or the fairy princess
>
> of the storybook ; dreams between painted covers.
> On Vienna where we caught a glimpse of
> the Emperor and people laughed
> sadly, and the Danube follows its troubles to Pesth.
>
> On Prague where the hours perform and death tells
> the moments of living. On London of pigeons
> and many and changing bridges, of punctual
> red-eyed omnibuses weaving in Parliament Square.
>
> But the brain tries : like these our stars are fading,
> old Memory's shadows are fainter and silently
> leaves have covered the path. Turn back and
> trace the course of Love, our one Redeemer.
>
> Where are you hidden, o ageless god, o preserver ?
> What ocean separates us, across
> what continent are your footsteps leading
> through age, through death, to service of these living ?

I now move quickly to the younger poets, of whom perhaps not yet enough is known to be able to estimate with any exactness their position.

J. L. Good has written a swift-moving poem in the Auden tradition in *God made the Country* ? As Howarth and his coterie had done before, so Good attacks

> the futility of the bridge set in the clubhouse,
> the private jealousies, the secular grouse,
> and conventional cant of parochial committees ;
> the menacing chimneys in capital cities.

and so on. It is again a question of " death has us yet in pawn." And in the last four lines Good gives expression to the sadness of many partings on railway platforms, partings made necessary by the war :

And still, last irony of our death in life,
we have no time but what will serve
to crush up a whole life's love
into a forlorn waving of the hand.

The next few poets may be mentioned more briefly. G. M. Wilson has the pleasant grace of a poet lost in his own reflections and feelings. In *Poem to E.I.B.* he says

Come, walk this tunnel of our booming dreams
Where wanting swirls like water around barges,
Keep close by me in the unfriendly rooms,
Be careful till the corridor enlarges.

This is Wilson in a sincere mood; his *Channel Crossing* is good but artificial. Oliver Coburn has written some good humorous poetry of a kind superior to that which frequently appears in *Punch*. Kenneth Harris has the violence of the discontented satirist and expresses the eternal disillusionment in a new biting fashion. Take for instance these lines about James Joyce:

A crumpled horn and spotted eider
Spawned an Irish writer free.
Banned and banned but far from busted,
While a prurient public lusted
And a hopeful printer trusted
That the censor would relent.

Richard Adams, after several years spent whoring after the more decadent gods of Swinburnia and Georgia, is now, as a result of the war, beginning to assimilate the writings of his own day. Here is an example of his style from *Poem to E.R.*

Fix her tranquil and strong, like Phryne eternally swaying
In a stilled flash of movement, and my love
Would itself welcome death, such perfect tension.
Or let the single moment of a smile
Remain indicative of years.
Only grant certainty, more than this love
Of firm lips lifted like a curve of wings
Receding; eyes that are clouds
Tugged obedient through a windy sky.

His later poems show more progress. He has developed a useful word technique. Thus "twigs crackling like laughter," from the poem *Skating*, or "Silence peels off

the world like an old skin," from *Sonnet*. His *Faery Story*, with its endeavour to trace, "A logical consequence that was God's will," in the deaths of uncounted thousands, could only have been written after this most recent development.

Miles Vaughan Williams, another interesting young poet, I met for the first time in the bar of the Randolph about a fortnight after the beginning of the war. In appearance he seemed to combine the nobility of Rafi with the enigmatic wistfulness of Peter Pan. He did everything well,—was captain of a hockey team, president of a dramatic society, and had spent a vacation motoring to Turkey in a £13 car. Like Adams, he has had to get rid of a whole heap of Georgian persiflage, which had until last summer been a dead weight on his poetry. Soon he secured an assured rhythm, as in *Damascus*:

> Confident lips, which bear
> the death of hips advances never made
> and aid with suède their struggles to persuade.

or in the descriptive first verse of *Four Winds*:

> Light lotus in limb,
> Flesh feather to feel,
> Swift-clear in the stream,
> White mother of pearl.

Parlour Maid's Passion marks another stage, if only from the point of view of slickness. In *The Mother* he reaches something nearer maturity.

> Laughter-lined feeling, but never meeting,
> Simple-sad searching for boyhood hour;
> Hardness not healing the broken manhood,
> Nor soft care calming his jungle fire.
>
> Stilled by praying, numbed by slaving,
> Lashed by lust of bonds to tear.
> "Mother, leave me. Mother, save me."
> "Son, I serve thee. Hear, and spare."
>
> "Where's my baby?" "Gone my lover."
> The thorns are red; he adds a cross.
> Meek she pleads, "Recover never?"
> Still whisper fades, "Your loss. Your loss."

Finally we come to the two most important poets of the younger group, Keith Douglas and J. C. Hall, both of whom are included in "The Best Poems of 1939." In style and subject matter they mostly break clean away from the influence of the elder group, which is perhaps significant, while equally so is the fact that they wield no influence themselves,—Keith Douglas being of a retiring nature and J. C. Hall having left the University on the outbreak of war. Oxford writers in fact have to-day no leader,—as Howarth once was or as Nicholas Moore now is in Cambridge.

Keith Douglas is one of the keenest, most musical, and careful poets Oxford has produced. He subjects all his work to a searching critical analysis and is rarely contented with inferior workmanship. He is, however, a poet of the ivory tower, and though one may say of him that his tower is very beautiful, it is not often that he leaves it; and even when he does his feet are so padded when he goes down the stairs and the door is closed behind him so gently, that his excursion is scarcely noticed. In *Poem from a Sequence*, for instance, verse two:

> That church, amputated by high explosive,
> Where priests no more lift up their murmurous Latin,
> And only the sun, a solitary worshipper,
> Tiptoes towards the altar and rests there,

although containing a vision of war, is so quiet as not to be out of place with Douglas' other memories, the bright fish of the tropical seas, the pet squirrel, the turtle and catamaran, and the smile of the peasant girl. Almost all Douglas' poetry has the beauty of a resigned sadness. *Kristin*, for instance, commences:

> This season like a child on airy points
> Has crept behind you in an evening time
> To take you unawares and touch your hair
> With a gift of gold;

but ends

> Take this, these limpid days will not be constant;
> They will forsake you, will not reappear.

Recently Douglas has become obsessed with the question of death. *Poor Mary* deals with the problem in an artificial way:

In you all
colours are dark and casemented for ever;
no answering song inside the cold wall,

and it is death more than anything else that occasionally brings Douglas down from the top of his tower. So *Dejection* has the significant phrases:

The autumn clothes
Are on; Death is the season and we the living
Are hailed by the solitary to join their regiment,
To leave the sea and the horses and march away
Endlessly.

Haydn-Clock Symphony is the most typical Douglas poem I can find, though if I had it with me I might have quoted *Pas de Trois*!

The timepiece standing butler in the hall
Beneath the remote ceiling, with the same
Grave air as time himself, will let you pass
To quiz your elegant person in a glass
And enter the long room. The brilliant game
Of dancing's at its height, the panic fall

And rise of music on the amazing floor
Where dresses, white dresses, sweep and dip
To the high notes as distant as the moon.
By a polite enchantment of the tune
Detained, step opposite some cherry lip,
Dark eye and oval countenance demure.

Consider, Sir, you move in eternity here:
No wonder you have the carriage of a god,
For here you are the man who in your sleep
Walks in the corridors and in the deep
Recesses of your mind; where you have trod
The polished ground of dreaming every year.

Yet you Death's servant must return to service:
Re-enter the hall and find the solemn clock
Who cries that Time's alive. And so put on
Your garment of sad days and get you gone.
Against you and your raucous world they'll lock,
But open up when you forsake Death's service.

J. C. Hall is a poet less escapist and more vivid, but what Douglas loses in this comparison he makes up for with his distilled perfection. J. C. Hall (the same thing is true of

his character) is full of action, bubbling over with life's excitement. This short poem has all the satisfaction about it of a glass of champagne :

O never say there is no peace
Within my mind ; for when your voice
Cries in the wilderness, I am
Lost in a quiet elysium.

O never say there is no mirth
About my lips ; for when your mouth
Quickens to do a lovely deed,
Your laughter matters to my blood.

O never say there is no hope
Within my heart ; for when you leap
Naked and cool along my grief,
The touch of you is hope enough.

Often Hall comes right down to ground level, as in *The Singers* where he considers the problem of six unemployed miners singing in the rain on Piccadilly. And in *Dead Men* he reflects on the lives lost in the last war :

Men swallowed up in time,
hearts that were May's butterflies
and leaves whispering along grave avenues.

Hall frequently poses for himself awkward questions, as in *If to-day I had come to a dead-end* :

Would it have been so very pitiful ?
Would they have said " He was too young
To die " in their voices that cling
Round one like the well-knitted shawl of grief ?
Such enigmas play around me,
Poor assessor of futility.

The same enigmatic mood is found in *And what for praise ?* with its ideal of all knowledge and all beauty, while *The Wild Ways of My Heart* shows the conflict in himself between love and hate.

Hall on the whole is a strange poet, and until he has combined what he would preserve of his early work into one volume it will be difficult to get a just estimate of him. He is at present a diamond uncut. One gets the impression that he is trying out style after style with all the daring at

his disposal. In *Curtains* he plays a chord which draws an echo from Marvell:

> One likewise swooning in the cool
> Uncurtained church at vesper bell
> Came to a miserable deep grave
> When men most passionately live.

In many poems he owes a lot to Hopkins, as in *Remember Wind Kills*:

> Remember wind kills; sickles the health;
> Shakes and breaks the firm tower; cuts
> Deep down; reaps strength, all power and wealth;
> Leaves all bruised and used; can take life
> Even; spares not, cares nothing what shuts
> Past opening ever, for all time beyond grief.
>
> Remember wind rules, cruel snow makes decision;
> Vision yields to fog; hail flails, flogs, head,
> Eyes and ear. No harness holds wind-stallion
> Nor rein keen rain. All men together
> Respect these kings; you too must, lest o too soon led
> Beyond me utterly and all weather.

One thing about Hall is certain: his first book when it comes will be important.

Since this survey would be incomplete without some mention of my own work I will give a few examples and finish. In point of view of period I occupy a position midway between the elder, Howarth group and the present generation of younger poets. From my childhood I have been haunted by fairies and witches, burning houses, ghosts, secret corridors, and all the paraphernalia of the dreamworld. Traces of this are to be found in *In this dream Kingdom* and also, I suppose, in *Rain* and *Full Fathom Five*. And the last verse of the first of these poems gives some indication of the ideal that reigns in those insubstantial surroundings.

> Some day a sailing for home and the heart's Hamlet,
> De Quincey's Ann smiling on Easter Sunday,
> "So then," I said, "I have found you at last."

From 1937 onwards the usual disillusionment began to take shape in my mind in the form of war, which however I never regarded consciously as being inevitable. In poems like *No Crosses* I began to ask such questions as:

Shall we let our hearts wander?
There where the pictures are dangling,
Wall-paper flapping, tables entangling
With chairs, bricks and iron, rubble and stone.

And something of the same inspiration lies behind *Peter and Henry and James and I*, *Fog*, and *The End*. I have always advocated personal poetry and poetry concerned with life or the modern world. I like however the sound of beautiful names and the slick feel of words. *Nigel* is a typical poem:

Nigel drowning in summer has heart's treasure,
Sun joy on flesh, sorrow surging of sea,
Sand loose below free body, pale brown
The skin rippling with long loosing
Of city breath, sea swell
Brave in the ear, all well
In this dear kingdom.

Enough for a day? Enough, Nigel, for life.
Sun bears deep over sorrow, over the trench
Dawn shows still skin, grey mould over carrion.
Sun rises with no gladness
For no breath. Poor ghost
Thin in the wind, all lost
In this dear kindgom.

Shortly is to appear *The Oxford Miscellany*, an anthology edited by Alec Hardie and under the influence of Edmund Blunden. This volume showing the reactions of several of these Oxford poets to the opening months of the war should be of significance in the present time. And no article on Oxford Poetry would be complete without some grateful acknowledgment to the artist Baptista Gilliat-Smith, who has so frequently in the past year placed the hospitality of her charming flat in the Turl at the disposal of Oxford writers for purposes of celebration or discussion.

The above article is long, but I feel important. Forty or fifty per cent of the post-war poetry that is to come will, I feel, be written by those of the poets I have mentioned who survive, in combination with those working along similar lines in Cambridge under the influence of Nicholas Moore. Ironically it may perhaps be the accidents of war rather than their own promise and quality, which may eventually decide their fame or failure.

JOHN WALLER

THE OLIVE TREE

BENEATH the olive tree I lie,
A canopy of argent lace
Throws down its shadow on my face,
And through the wavering filagree
Upward gazing I can see
Blue pastures of infinity.
The earth is warm beneath my head,
And warm upon my eyes the sun,
I close them fast; a benison
Of peace and rest lies over me.
The Saints asleep, the Holy Dead,
Are not more happy now than I.
I would the turning world might cease
Her endless, weary travelling,
The stars grow dim, the planets swing
No more across the fields of space;
And quiet fold the firmament
Whilst all created things at peace
Lay still as I, absolved, content,
Beneath some cosmic olive tree.

BARBARA BINGLEY.

HERE AT THE END OF SEEKING

HERE, at the end of seeking, heart has found
Beloved heart; here confident has turned
As flower to sun, and here at last has learned
All lovely things were possible. No wound
Can dissipate such certain comfort. None
Can overthrow the heart made strong by faith;
Such is secure alway, and not by death,
Nor fear, nor loneliness, can be undone.

Whatever of desolate and divided time
The years may hold, or what vain tenderness
Trouble the night, it steadfast shall possess
Strength to endure, and fortitude to climb
From self. Heart that is once so strangely blest
Is rich forever, nor shall be dispossessed.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

BEFORE the fall of the curtain upon a dramatic life in a double sense, the late W. B. Yeats, Irish poet and dramatist, took the onset of old age greatly to heart, and wrote thus with poetic vituperation,—

> You think it horrible that lust and rage
> Should dance attention upon my old age;
> They were not such a plague when I was young,
> What else have I to spur me into song?

The only temptation left was, as he declared, to have quietude at his life's end, and set to work to remould his personality in a fit of frenzy, and that was to become like Lear's, whose mind became violently elemental, or Timon who at last raged against mankind, or William Blake who stormed the heavens until truth obeyed his call in visions.

In a somewhat abstruse poem, *The Man and the Echo*, he illustrated how that within the "caverns of the mind" man's conscience asks questions, and it receives no answer, only an echo from below, when it said

> I halt
> At the bottom of a pit
> That broad noon has never lit,
> And shout a secret to the stone.
> All that I have said and done,
> Now that I am old and ill,
> Turns into a question till
> I lie awake night after night
> And never get the answers right.

Thus the voice of the normal, or waking, consciousness is echoed by the "rocky" voice of the stone in the lower depths of being, and the same relates to *Everyman*, who

> Stands in judgment on his soul
> And, all work done, dismisses all
> Out of intellect and sight
> And sinks at last into the night.
> The Echo. Into the night.

I consider this one of the best of his metaphysical poems, in which are frequent flashes of luminous thought.

He appears from these *Last Poems* (Macmillan, 6s.) to have looked back upon his past life with occasional feelings of regret intermingled with many joyful emotions, for his had been a busy life and he had served his country in

bringing about its literary rebirth which in due course had procured for him honourable recognition. Up to the last he found pleasure in memories of many people and past events, and this brought to his mentality a compensatory balance for the loss of old friends and associates of early manhood and middle age, also those recollections associated with his native county, a countryside replete with legend and folk-lore which had formed a background for many of his poems and plays. Mountain slopes that have ever withstood the mighty onslaughts of Atlantic tides, wave-swept tongues of land, " dove-coloured sands," castles, each bearing a history, and harbours with moving and anchored ships, and where Ben Bulben sets the scene, of a countryside with cairns, cromlechs and stone circles all fairy-haunted, and where lay the ancient dead who still haunt those regions

> That pale, long-visaged company
> That air in immortality
> Completeness of their passions won ;
> Now they ride the wintry dawn.

In addition to the pleasures of memory he had often evoked from the deep wells of his consciousness recondite subjects which he longed to discuss with any interested party,—

> I have found nothing half so good
> As my long-planned half solitude,
> Where I can sit up half the night
> With some friend that has the wit
> Not to allow his looks to tell
> When I am unintelligible.

Besides these reveries that had brought him a certain degree of comfort and consolation, there was still left to him the objective world with its many beauties, and natural splendours, then in addition were the noble arts of painting and literature

> Picture and book remain,
> An acre of green grass
> For air and exercise,
> Now strength of body goes ;
> Midnight an old house
> Where nothing stirs but a mouse.

And there too was his poetry revealing " unknown modes

of being," and each recapitulation in reading or in memory brought mental ease, or else some excerpt from the tapestry of his prose, and as I have seen it stated that " in religion, little less in poetry, men seek through imagination to satisfy the hunger for reality both of the mind and heart." His own poetry that sings of delight in both sensuous and temporal things, as well as that fairy lore, which he had woven into the shimmering texture of his verse, he brought into those dramas based upon Irish heroic legends, or scenes laid in worlds beyond the ken of human faculty, except in dreams.

In a remarkable poem in which he depicts himself as a wild old man, which reads like a confession but can hardly be taken seriously, he reflects at daybreak with a lighted candle beside him, and on account of his age is unable to join the throng of fisher-lads who, or was it imagination ?, he overheard away outside the walls of his abode, dancing with the girls down on the seashore, and memories of the pleasures of his youth return, so he becomes a young man once more in the dark when he existed subjectively regardless of his aging body, but in the light was still a wild old man who must follow his heart's dictates, but in spite of suffering was obliged to rest upon the lower road which on account of age he was perforced to take, yet why should he not have been content ?

> All his happier dreams come true—
> A small old house, wife, daughter, son,
> Grounds where plums and cabbage grew,
> Poets and Wits about him drew ;
> " What then ? " sang Plato's ghost. " What then ? "

He had been in his young days a poet whose vivid imagination had soared beyond this earth and had touched the borderland of that undiscovered country which according to Plato is the only reality, and that this earth with all its beauties is but a pale reflection of that unseen world which comes to the soul of the living only in dreamless sleep. Yeats imagined it as having resemblance to the backgrounds of certain glorious paintings of a God or Saint ; like those of the Quadrocento.

Gardens where a soul's at ease;
Where everything that meets the eye,
Resemble forms that are or seem
When sleepers wake and yet still dream,
And when it's vanished still declare,
With only bed and bedstead there,
That heavens had opened.

Here it is interesting to note in connection with symbolic dreams of an unseen heaven, that he took for the underlying theme of this, his last book, a very ancient symbol as a means for poetical expression, and had reverted to a certain lyrical phase when he had come under the influence of the French Symbolists, but his latest emblem was that of the Egyptian goddess of the heavens standing upon the back of the king of beasts, which represents the elevation of the starry sphere, and those images as he wrote portray

A mind Michael Angelo knew
That can pierce the clouds,
Or inspired by frenzy
Shake the dead in their shrouds;
Forgotten else by mankind,
An old man's eagle mind.

Thus in symbolic form has been handed down through thousands of years the wisdom of past ages, being the elevation of the human mind, which is the soul, above the ferocity of brute fact and physical energies, and far outreaching the starry depths of the universe.

Yeats in like manner made use of those symbols that underlie his poetical pictures in order to represent some concept rich both in imagery and imagination, for poetry, as he has written, "is any flower that brings a memory of emotion," that hailing back of the Latin joy and the Latin love of beauty, as did Blake when he made songs of beauty out of the glowing texture of his dreams.

The symbolic figures of the ancient gods and heroes in which Yeats found inspiration, for he himself was essentially Celtic, filled the background of many of those poems and poetic dramas he had based upon so many legends and sagas of old time in all their mystery and dream-worldliness, as well as the deep sorrows, and hopes forlorn told in bygone tragedies, and into these he wove his poetic

embroideries where beauty moved in golden majesty, and all were attuned in perfect harmony.

In some of the poems in the present volume his muse had changed to a lighter vein, as he wrote of Villon, "it is what calls up an earthly energy which is delight."

One of these poems with its sorrowful refrain, "O my dear, O my dear" is Boccaccian, and deals with both pure and unchaste love, and yet the priest when he heard the confession made by the second lady after she had reached old age, in his innocence concerning such mundane affairs as affinities and other matters relating to sex made no discrimination, so he ordered a rose-tree to be planted upon her grave, understanding her case, beside those other rose-bushes that years previously had been placed to commemorate the memory of two romantically devoted lovers,

> He bade them take and bury her
> Beside her lady's man,
> And set a rose-tree on her grave,
> And now none living can,
> When they have plucked a rose there,
> Know where its roots began.
> O my dear, O my dear.

Another poem which is characteristically Irish, and in imitation of the old, and one time popular, street ballad, has a decided touch of humour.

Many of his early poems are filled with the fleeting joys of romantic love and the charm of personal beauty, and he contended that it was Helen's beauty that every man desired, and that the wisdom and endurance of Odysseus has been the desire of every woman that had come into the world.

In poetry men and women endeavour to find through imagination the apotheosis of all that is beautiful in order to satisfy the hunger for reality both of heart and intellect, and poetry to achieve that end must in itself contain beauty, thus his early love poems in luminous thought and feeling are amongst the loveliest in our language, and are filled with intense and passionate beauty.

Over and over again he reverted, as the poetic mind is wont to do when unconsciously upflows the dormant

imageries in the sub-conscious, to an unfortunate romantic love affair of his youth, and even in his latest book there is a poem in which one of " The beautiful lofty things " he remembers was a certain disdainful lady

> at Howth station waiting a train,
> Pallas Athene in that proud back and arrogant head :
> All the Olympians ; a thing never known again.

And yet his devotion, as he had elsewhere put it, " might have been offered to an image in a milliner's window, or a statue in a museum."

This lady of his dreams whilst steeped in the political freedom of Ireland had played the title-rôle in his play, *The Countess Cathleen*, and it was dedicated to her, and she also took the part of the old woman, who is the emblem of Ireland, in that short allegorical play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in one of its performances, and as Patrick, a character in the play, says in reply to the question " Did you see an old woman ? " another character replies " I did not, but I saw only a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen." The same lady had brought Cipriani, a friend of Garibaldi, over to Ireland in order to work up some insurrectionary movement, and thus he had known

> A Helen of social welfare dream,
> Climb on a wagonette to scream.

Prior to this his loves were imaginative, and he first worshipped before the shrine of beauty such as the faery bride of Oisin, which was the romantic subject of an early poem.

> And then a counter-truth filled out its play,
> *The Countess Cathleen* was the name I gave it ;
> She, pity-crazed, had given her soul away,
> But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it.
> I thought my dear must her own soul destroy,
> So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,
> And this brought forth a dream and soon enough
> This dream itself had all my thought and love.

I quote this from one of the best poems in the book, *The Circus Animals' Desertion*, in which he reverts to his allegorical dreams, his plays, in fact his life's work that had at the

bitter end changed within his mental purview to a conceit, which had concurred with the writer of Ecclesiastes, who held that all is vanity.

> Now that my ladder's gone,
> I must lie down where all the ladders start,
> In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart,

and as he wrote despairing

> Players and painted stage took all my love,
> And not those things that they were emblems of.

This poem I consider is the one that will appeal most to the general reader, as well as *The Municipal Gallery Revisited*, in which he evokes memories of many of his friends who had passed away

> come to this hallowed place
> Where my friends' portraits hang and look thereon;
> Ireland's history in their lineaments trace;
> Think where man's glory most begins and ends,
> And say my glory was I had such friends.

There was Lady Gregory, one of the chief founders of the Abbey Theatre, Hugh Lane, the collector of pictures, John Synge, the Irish dramatist, and many others. In another poem he calls upon his ancestors to judge what he had achieved, the Yeats family, Middletons, Corbets, Pollexfens and Butlers concerning whom he had written interesting details both social and historical.

> I call on those that call me son,
> Grandson, or great-grandson,
> On uncles, aunts, great-uncles or great-aunts,
> To judge what I have done.

Another fine poem is *Under Ben Bulben*, his swan-song, indeed a notable performance, perhaps the finest in the book, and from which I have already quoted. Somebody wrote that Irish poets sing best when their country is in the midst of political or social strife, and as the political poems in this book all belong to a period which is long since dead, they lack in consequence the breathing fire of his earlier passionate poems and fine mastery of both rhythm and language.

Only quite recently during a discussion upon the poetry

of Yeats a well-known man of letters said to us that in his opinion the deceased poet and dramatist was not a great poet, but a great minor poet, and as my thoughts reverted to those immortals whom the world has acclaimed as greater than the great, I concurred. At the same time I endorse what John Eglinton wrote in stating that a poet is great who lives in a world of his own like Spenser or William Morris, but to which only in certain moods we have the passport. Yeats, who ranked high as a poet, was consequently great in this respect, for he lived in a sequestered world consisting of Celtic tradition, romance and fairy-lore where shadowy figures pass as if through the twilight of dreams. He differed from Shakespeare on this point, for to him the kingdom of fairy was a supreme reality.

There are two plays in the present volume, viz., *Purgatory*, and the *Death of Cuchulain*. The first is a short play in which there are only two characters, an old man, and his son who is a mere boy. It was first performed at the Abbey Theatre Festival in 1938. I have not seen it acted, but after reading the play I was haunted, so to speak, by the memory of its genre and tragedy. It is moving, but highly depressing, and is based upon the age-long conception—call it superstition if you will—that the souls of people who have led wicked and cruel lives continue to carry out their enormities in their " old habitations and familiar spots " after death of their bodies. That is their purgatory.

The Death of Cuchulain is evidently only a fragment of a play that Yeats had intended to have been the last of a series with that mythical hero for its central figure. He evidently relinquished the idea of completing it on account of, as he said, the mind of Ireland having departed from those æsthetic ideals held by him as well as his fellows. But romanticism was threatened, for mental and physical objects had become material, as he wrote, " Romantic Ireland's dead and gone," and this was largely due to the " murk of political and religious antagonism," consequently the sorrows of Celtic tragedy had no longer any hold upon the mind of the people, and this was evinced by the reception given to his romantic play, *The Countess Cathleen*, for which

religious motives had no justification. And yet he was convinced that romance had reawakened with the rebellion of 1916.

If anyone instead of being satisfied with a desultory reading of the last poems and plays of that deceased gifted poet and dramatist, and is prepared to make a study of the high literary expressions in their language of song by which he conveyed his final message to the human heart, will find such an undertaking, as I did myself, to be a pleasurable experience, and this not alone on account of the ideas they convey, but the philosophies he had embodied in the more recondite of his poems.

Some of these are no doubt abstruse, but are worth while pondering over even if one is only able to elucidate a bare line of approach to those hidden realities that lie hidden beneath a labyrinth of images and rhapsodistic effects, for the mental activities are soothed, if not compensated, by new and varying cadences in their subjective music, also by his use of luxuriant lyric phrases.

In addition to the poems I have mentioned I wish to draw attention to a poem inscribed to Dorothy Wellesley, the poetess, *In Tara's Halls*, illustrating a strange symbolic allegory. News from a Delphic Oracle, a glittering revelry in rhythm and rhyme, Lapis Lazuli, a mosaic composed of coloured marble and clay, and all these belong to the lowest section of the great symbol, and it represents earthiness.

His last poems all display an outcome of a diversity of moods, and there is little falling off in respect of his old mastery of language and metrical forms, at the same time I maintain that even the best poem does not reach that high degree of perfection attained by many of the best poems of his earlier periods, still despite some adverse criticism I contend that even the most trivial of his verses by no means display a negative quality.

" Literature nowadays survives marble and bronze " and the name of Yeats will be known popularly to coming generations like that of Thomas Moore as a literary landmark, but from a strict literary and artistic standpoint the answer to the question how long will his poetry survive?

is at present a secret to be kept by Time, upon whose shifting sands his name may only come to be written, instead of an indelible record of his worth: and still I feel assured that there will be many yet unborn who, filled with poetic and philosophic passion, will help to keep his memory green.

H. T. Hunt Grubb.

ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN WARTIME

TENTATIVE through the blue April air comes the cuckoo's first call,
over the green-filmed hawthorn-hedges, the purple-misted woods—
the first call of the cuckoo merging with the faint bleating of new-born lambs—
again the voice of life, the voice of resurrection.
Quiet are the fields that throb with a passionate hidden pulse,
quiet the sky-mirroring pools that teem with hidden movement,
quiet the blue sunlit air that invisibly quivers with bird-song.

Suddenly, violating the living stillness, comes the cruel purr of a machine-gun,
the voice of death, the voice of evil, blasphemously mocking the spring.

Dallas Kenmare.

AFTERLIFE

WHEN the peril of living is over and done . . . at length,
And we fall asleep to our sin, and awake in strength,
Awake to the laughter, the method of God, and the mirth,
The amazing love, and the light of a second birth.

And when in strife we forsake the life we have led,
And discover the morning brighter among the dead,
Discover the men who were brutal, and hated below,
Their devil-half gone, and the best of them left to grow.

Where then are the men whose rights no man can deny,
Who are given the run of the courts of the sun and the sky?
These are they who were bowed by the quarrels of kings,
That have suffered the humble, the rough and the tumble of things.

Rachel E. Boulton.

THE POEMS OF LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE

THE publication of a classic in more or less definitive form is an event in the history of literature. Such an event is the appearance of the *Collected Poems of Lady Margaret Sackville* (Martin Secker, The Richards Press, 10s. 6d. net). To obtain classical distinction in one's lifetime is given to few: the crown of bay is elusive as a will o' wisp; the laurel loves best to grow slowly by the grave of genius. Lady Margaret is of the few who came early to fame. She was little more than a child when Wilfred Scawen Blunt found, and heralded the finding of, a new star in the poetic heavens. Like Cowley and Pope, she had "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came": the volume before me opens with an "Extract from a long Dramatic Poem dictated at the age of six." Her precosity and the renown of the Sackville name, illustrious in the annals of English poetry, drew all eyes upon her. Her personal gifts enhanced the impression created by her verse: the beautiful bust by the late Sculptor Royal for Scotland, Dr. Pittendrigh Macgillivray, of which there are examples in bronze in the Art Gallery at Aberdeen and in the Diploma Gallery in Edinburgh, will remain as a visible monument of a rare and remarkable poetic personality. This admirable portrait is reproduced as frontispiece of the volume.

Immediately following a preliminary group of *Early Poems* (a wider selection of which had been welcome), the poet presents us with what are perhaps her finest compositions. Of these *Dramatic Poems* the first four are masterpieces—echoes of the antique world, exquisite in craftsmanship, pure in diction, and so warm and breathing that you would swear they were born in ancient Hellas and transmuted to English by some spiritual alchemy. The first of these poems, *The Pythoness*, is a monody spoken by the priestess of the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The blank verse is full of subtle modulations as it follows the thoughts of the Pythoness—the "medium" whom the powerful spirit of the nature-divinity controlled and possessed. From the first line to the last the dramatic utterance

is intense, the poetry exalted. *The Victim*, another blank-verse monody, reveals the sublime exaltation of the sacrificed. There follows the strangely lovely monody of *Syrinx*, the pursued of Pan. Composed in *terza rima*, in the pauses of which Lady Margaret permits herself more freedom than do her Italian prototypes, but less than her English forerunners, Byron (in *The Prophecy of Dante*) and Shelley (in *The Triumph of Life*), this poem is a revelation of almost absolute vision. The poet has virtually created a thought-form which is an entity:

> I am Syrinx: I am she who when the bold
> Clear voice of morning sings the world awake
> Rises and drives the flock from the safe fold . . .

The drama of the legend is developed with the most perfect art: the phantom of the inexorable Pan haunts the very soul of the Nymph, "the reeds springing in the full flood" summon her with spirit-whispers to her predestined haven:

> I am Syrinx: I am afraid I would have peace.

The same qualities are found in the longer "Dramas," *The Wooing of Dionysus* and *Tereus*; there is the same innate comprehension of the secret Nature Forces, of which the psychic minds of the antique poets were fully aware; though the concentrated power of such poems as *Syrinx* is of necessity diffused in the more extended treatment. The "Prelude" to *Dionysus* is a hymn to the awakening spirit of the year, an invocation of Spring couched in the melody of rapture:

> Where is the maiden fair enough,
> Spring, to fitly honour thee?
> She must have the eyes of love
> And the soul of chastity;
> She must supple be and fleet,
> High of heart and light of tread,
> With the West wind in her feet
> And the stars about her head—
> She must be thy counterpart
> With thine own rebellious heart.

Lady Margaret Sackville is a poet of many moods, and her artistry has enabled her to find poetic forms suited to the changing aspects of her inspiration. She has written

sonnets of tranquil beauty befitting the high thought that informs them; ballads weird with the witchery of a world of dream; light, humorous pieces, Puck-like in their impish ingenuity; and a body of "Epitaphs" that in number and uniform excellence have positively no peer in our language. These are the *Hundred Little Poems* (as they were originally named); the epitaphs are imaginary, and comprise a hundred types, and it is feigned that each one has been composed by the subject of the poem. The following is a beautiful and curious example:

> Humbly I lived but very proudly died,
> Death's chosen! Can you wonder at my pride?
> Philosophers and Heroes, Saints and Kings
> He left—but folded *me* beneath his wings.

Welcome as this finely printed edition of her poems will assuredly be to Lady Margaret's many admirers, it will not give them unqualified satisfaction; for it does not, as the title suggests, comprise a complete collection of her poetical works. Rather is it a "Selection" from her poetry—a copious selection truly (the volume contains 324 pages), and one so broad in its scope as to embrace every phase of her achievement, yet still a "Selection." I miss regretfully the drama of *Bertrud*, surely one of the noblest, as it was the most ambitious of Lady Margaret's creations. Perhaps she is over critical of her work, and, like many another poet, is inclined to view her earlier productions unfavourably in the light of her maturer mind. This is an error; for every age has its appropriate moods and manners, its own emotional urge and metrical schemes. Goethe has observed how much poets mar their earlier compositions by altering them later; and here we have to mourn, not merely the revision of a lofty work, but its total suppression—all save the *Proem*. Torn, as it is, from its original setting, this rare jewel might worthily have stood in a place of honour at the head of Lady Margaret's works, like a herald announcing the pageant of her poetry, like music that ushers the spirit into the house of sleep:

> What dreams are these which from the myrtle stem
> And the crushed leaves arise?

What shining host of fragrant memories ?
Let us bend our heads and take our fill of them,
Here where the pale verge of enchanted seas
Meets the faint luminous skies.

At this hour of spiritual travail it is often hard to fix the attention upon even the best poets. There are, however, some poets, whose range of flight is such that following their trail we reach remote regions beyond mortal cares. I am sure that Lady Margaret Sackville is of the company. An epitaph of hers has the power to console like a momentary benediction ; and her dramatic idylls are as magic ships that bear us upon a timeless sea.

C. R. Cammell.

LATE SPRING

NO sun shines, and the lagging days
Are teased and faded by a biting wind.
There is no moisture in the air
To give the shadows softness, and the blue
Of indigo to farthest distances.

Green are the wide fields, in reality,
Where sown with winter corn ;
Brown are they, where the farmer's patient toil
Ploughed them for sowing when the spring should come—
But smooth straight furrows, fresh young blades
Alike are sanded by the nagging wind
Till they are stiff and dry as last year's grass.

Lovely indeed is the late spring
Which in a single night is born again,
When in the morning, suddenly,
The rising sap gleams red in every twig,
And on the limes the running tide has left
A foamy spray of tiny, crumpled leaves.

The willows, muttering by village ponds,
From witches turn to fairies overnight.
Orchards are garlanded with rose-tipped apple buds
Ere ever they have time to shed
The virgin white-and-green of April days—
Plum blossom overhead, and round their feet
The rabbits' parsley nodding lacy plumes.

Marguerite Edgelow.

LAMENT

COLD is the wind and the stripped branches bare,
The sky is grey and the low clouds are weeping,
Mourning the Autumn's end and Summer sleeping
And the long drowsy days that were so fair,
When life went happily and free from care
Beneath the moon that saw the harvest's reaping,
A smiling, burnished disc, its vigil keeping
Over the field paths where the lovers pair.

All these are gone and mournful is the sky
And all around the curtain of the rain.
In part we die, even as all things die
A little at this season; but in vain
It strives to crush us wholly; for we cry
In hope to Spring that must return again.

J. Sackville Martin.

FANTASY IN JUNE

DOG-ROSES all enchant me
With blossoms pink and white;
And oh! their memories haunt me
Along the lanes at night
With ghosts of man and maiden
That through the moth-time steal,
With damp sea-thunder laden
That bids the senses reel.

There too the frothy elder
Hangs down in creamy foam;
The fox-gloves white bewilder
With snow the dells of loam.
There Bacchanals are straying
Adown the mossy lanes;
And Ocean's violer, spraying
The dune with tears, complains.

II

The rounded hills and the stony fields
Are green like an unripe apple's skin;

And the fell-side, like an orchard, yields
Mossy branches above the whin.

I will pluck down, O heart of mine,
The little green hill like a little apple,
That hangs in the long lush grasses divine
That the breezes sway and the shadows dapple.

Sour will it be, O lips mine own,
And an acid crab within the mouth;
But oh! it quenches the thirst alone
Of home-longing and alien drouth. T. E. Casson.

A FEVER NOW IS RAGING

A FEVER now is raging through the veins
Of men and nations—racing faster, faster
To overcome earth's threatening disaster
And lift our life flung free from tyrant stains.
"Don't be too serious," says one, and drains
His cup of sloth, now making it his master;
But others cry, "We must have something vaster
Than satisfied the past in its birth-pains,
For our Tomorrow's World wakes in the womb
Of our Today and answers to our call
For life and liberty. It says, 'I can
Come forth and even from the narrow tomb
Of your weak wishes rise, without a fall,
To reach fulfilment of the perfect plan.'"
Helen T. Douglas Robinson.

THE NEW MOON

(from Hsiah Chin, aged 12, fourteenth century)

ON the third and fourth of each month,
The moon is dim, like the light before dawn;
It is not like an eyebrow soft as a moth,
Nor like a bow unstrung,
But a circlet of white jade broken in two:
One half has dropped in the dark blue sea,
The other still floats in the sky. Grace E. Mole.

THE DYNASTS : A TOPICAL NOTE

The Dynasts has come into its own as a great individual work, but it has been suggested by some that Hardy's epic-drama bears a strong resemblance to the old Greek tragedies. He certainly borrowed from their formula in adopting a chorus of spirits, divided and sub-divided, to comment upon the events and carry on the action of the play in narrative at certain points. There is the historical theme also, the loftiness of tone, the onlooking overworld, and, especially, a conviction of the inevitability of events and the doom of death overshadowing every act of man. But the differences are even greater than the resemblances. The dominant impression after reading *The Dynasts* is the tremendous scope of the work, covering ten years in point of time, nearly the whole of Europe in disposition, and bringing in a host of persons—military, naval, political : all those concerned in the Napoleonic Wars, including country folk and townsfolk, soldiery and stragglers, typically representing the common people of the times. The Greek tragedies were mostly built upon a single episode of crucial importance. If that great war epic, the *Iliad*, had been written in dramatic instead of narrative form it would perhaps have contained as many scenes of battle, a few councils on Olympus and in the tent of Agamemnon, and a naval expedition with convoys, but the whole objective of Troy is small compared with the vast enterprises of Napoelon and all the details of background we are given here.

Bonaparte's ambitious schemes are of course the unifying element in the whole work, which is strictly historical. Hardy had no truck with the created hero whose fortunes and romance are used as a thread to link all events together.

The flexible consistency of Hardy's diction is another impressive point. The spirits of the overworld have a distinctive poetry in their language, except the mockers, whose idiom belongs to modern prose and is harsh with cynicism. The dialogue of the chief characters is carried on for the main part in that nearest-to-speech form of verse, iambic pentameter, and that of Napoleon is occasionally touched with colloquialism. Dialect, with its own pith and rhythms, is always given in its natural places. The poetic tension taughtens and relaxes as emotion demands, resolves into prose, and even grows deliberately flamboyant in the Prince of Wales' banquet speech, just as do the lines of the Players in *Hamlet*, so that they may stand out in contrast from the rest of the play itself.

Perhaps the most modern evidences in the construction of *The Dynasts* are the pictorial descriptions introducing each scene, and the panoramic display of events. When the drama was produced some years ago by the O.U.D.S. it was of course impossible to reproduce them, and therefore the general effect was scrappy and disjointed. The mere pronouncing of these elaborate " stage " directions is not

The centenary of Thomas Hardy's birth (June 2nd) will be marked by the publication by Messrs. Macmillan of a selection of his poems.

enough, vividly though they are written, to bridge the gaps between presented scenes; nor is it the function of Hardy's Chorus to convey us from Southampton to Calais.

De Quincey in his essay on the Revolt of the Tartars saw great possibilities in the staging of his theme and considered that certain battles and events of that tremendous and tragic migration would have been good material for representing on the stage. The great facilities of the film might have tempted him still further. Now that sound as well as movement can be very perfectly reproduced for cinema purposes it is no idle fancy to portend that one day *The Dynasts* will be made into a magnificent film. The possibilities and illusion of photography alone could present such scenes as that of the English convoys converging upon the Bay of Biscay from the English ports, the superb tactics of the French armies in Central Europe, all the battle operations, Moscow ablaze, the terrible retreat from Russia, or even that smaller poignant episode when opposing bodies of troops come down to drink at the little Auberch brook and grasp hands across the life-saving water . . . all these being here sketched in with brilliant economy and geographical accuracy. Possible too would be the quick changes of interior scenes and the dissolving of walls in order to portray that which is going on outside them. Hardy's " fading out " methods are peculiarly suggestive of the screen—the blotting out of the landscape by drifting clouds or the smoke from beacon or guns, the arrival of darkness, and the obliterating medium of rain and snow. Poetry is less easy to tamper with than prose. Need we fear that the making of a film version would cheapen and distort Hardy's masterpiece ?

EVELYN D. BANGAY.

DIES IRAE

ARE the gods dead ? Last night I saw their thrones
All desolate beyond an empty sky,
And all their adversaries clambering high
Into that space, that with triumphant tones
Of laughter like the rattle of dried bones
Was shaken, as the throats of those who die.
When Lucifer and Ahriman soared by
Earth stirred as does a sleeper when he moans.
If gods should fail, let men take up the war
On evil; and if ill we may not stem,
The outlaw pilot of the morning star,
For all his powers, can only once condemn
To death. Why fear to be as good gods are ?
If they are dead we will be one with them.

WALTER BURTON.

POPLARS

I LIKE poplars
Set in straight lines in a green French field.
I think they were intended
To show men how to live—
Straight and true in the sunlight,
Shaken but never broken by wind or rain,
Unchanging, always quiet, always at peace.

I have found elms too passionate,
Curved outlines tossed against a racing sky,
And oaks too stubborn in nobility;
Beeches—oh, much too beautiful!
High green cathedrals lifting me away
Into strange thoughts I do not understand.
And I have found
Larches too young, and churchyard yews too old;
Hollies, at times, too cheerful; willows too sad;
And cherry is a careless debutante,
And birch a mocking sprite in silver clad.
I have pitied that pale and lonely bride
The blackthorn; I have feared
Dark pines that crowd a thousand alley-ways
On to some windy spur at the world's edge.

But I like poplars
Set in straight lines in a green French field,
In ordered sweet serenity they stand,
Stirring the centuries with their trembling peace.

B. F. PARGITER.

AFTER THE WAR

THEY must not return to the reeking street,
Re-climb the verminous stair,
Or descend the area steps to the foul-breathed room
Darkened with soot-grimed air.

No, they must never return, the hidden children,
—(The Piper's abroad)—until
The city slums are bombed or blasted for them,
Safe in their hollow hill,
Where they like boughs green in transforming light,
Strengthen and colour, bear

Fruit alien to the sodden city lots
And yellowing weeds grown there.

Then welcome revolution after war—
But without rope or rack;
The debt once paid, foundations laid for them—
Let them come dancing back!

BRENDA F. SKENE.

HEALING

WHEN the great red roses wither round your feet,
When the powers you vaunted pass beyond their prime,
Still remain to comfort you marjoram and meadow-sweet,
Agrimony, eye-bright and succory and thyme.

When you've fought with fortune, faced the shafts of age,
Finding life a fever and the world a flint,
These will make a bed for you, cinquefoil and saxifrage,
Lady's slipper, pimpernel, forget-me-not and mint.

Humble things and small things, these shall tend the hurt,
Fumitory, self-heal, mouse-ear, willowstrife,
Wide awake to welcome you, centaury and yellow-wort,
Closing with the twilight to dream you back to life.

E. G. HOARE.

MARY NASON pays a tribute to CHARLOTTE MEW (died March 24th, 1928):

This is a day you would have loved . . . I too,
Must run to greet
The first frail flowers that break the stubborn year
Must glow with joy the birds glad hymns to hear . . .
It is a happy thing how oft we meet,
O Friend I never knew . . . !

"Honour the dead," men say, but love is more
Than high esteem!
You must have walked this same relentless way—
A shadow on my path you often seem—
I wonder—shall I leave by that low door
Your wild heart battered for escape . . . ? Some day,
Perhaps—when I am sodden through and through
With bitter griefs you tasted long before . . .

. . . . This much is true
I shall not ever hold my dearest dream
Closer than I hold you. . . . !

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXXIV

Sister M. Therese tells us in *Now There is Beauty and Other Poems* (Macmillan Co., New York) something of the road by which she has travelled: "I am Wisconsin born (Oconto Falls, Wisconsin, 1902) but have lived in Milwaukee most of my life. Under the tutelage of my mother, the late Florence Brooks (Lentfoehr), a well-known Wisconsin artist, I began writing verse at about the age of nine.

"My first poems were of mountains, sunsets, and the sea—snatches of beauty I had glimpsed upon my mother's canvases. I remember never to have been consciously concerned with technique; the poetical lines sang themselves into my mind as if to some preconceived melody, the poem thus forming itself quite completely before a word was confided to paper. This, I find, is the method I have followed ever since, with this difference, that now I revise constantly and tirelessly, until at times the result surprises me with its newness. A poem must become a part of me, must live with me a long time, before I write it.

"My special training was in poetry's 'sister-art,' music; that too from my earliest years; I am a Conservatory graduate in piano. My higher education was got at Marquette University from which I hold a Bachelor's and a Master's degree, having specialized in English literature. For the past eight years I have taught English literature at the Sisters' Training School here at St. Mary's Convent in Milwaukee. My lectures are concerned chiefly with the philosophy of poetry. I have three hobbies: listening to *music; philosophy*, especially the philosophy of art and the metaphysics of poetry—here Jacques Maritain is my best loved author; and *long walks*, preferably into the country."

There are many beautiful sonnets in this collection. Let us read "Song Harvest":

> Lift up your eyes! the fields are white to reaping—
> Where beauty waits, divinely unafraid,
> Daring the keen cold of your sweetened blade
> Laying her gold to harvest. While with weeping
> Earth, the God-hungered, wakens from her sleeping,
> Soul-weary, sad, insatiate, unallayed,
> Reaches to you a hand by bitterness stayed,
> Knowing the gift ineffable in your keeping.
>
> Lift up your eyes! You who in maze of sorrow
> Visioned, have glimpsed God's wonder, calm unfurled,
> Poets of earth! . . . We are athirst to borrow
> Strength of your souls on dewy parchment pearled.
> Rise with a rapture, with a song to-morrow,
> And break the bread of beauty to the world!

In these poems of Sister Therese one is reminded of the magic we found in Mary Webb's books, always the presence of nature calls one as in "Of Death".

Welcome is a new book by Mrs. Edna Davis Romig. We had occasion to tell of her work three years ago. Associate Professor of English at the University of Colorado, her poetry is marked with an authenticity which belongs to those who have studied and *do* know. Her new volume *The Heart Affirming* (Dorrance and Co., Philadelphia) is divided into five sections of *Sonnets* for Spring, Summer, Autumn and for Winter, and the last quarter of the book holds a very well-done play entitled *Once in the Caucasus.*

Mrs. Romig sends us the following paragraph:

> " Any survey of art makes obvious the range and variety of material and expression; the whimsical, the flamboyant, the ironical, the elevated, the banal, the tender, the ugly, the radiant; the fresh, the decadent; the amusing, the memorable; the ephemeral, the eternal. Poetry, I suppose, shares with the other arts these gradations. I like to read all kinds; but I prefer the traditional best—that of classic simplicity, the noble and luminous. Poetry, to be significant, may concern, itself with the contemporary scene or with the universal, but it must have power and beauty. The poems that I write spring from some inner compulsion in the midst of exacting professional work. Personal responsibility has been with me since I was in my teens; recreation, extension of experience has had to come through this creative form. Yet to talk of beauty is for me pretentious; to define or analyse poetry impossible, perhaps superfluous. I like to keep quiet about the things that mean most to me—affection, aspiration.

There are skilful and beautiful sonnets in this collection. Taking the first from the different seasons will bring us a richness of expression and a delight to the ear: " Sonnets for Spring ":

> A flying rumour from the hills, a stir
> So delicate within the budding trees
> That one must hush to hear, soft urgencies
> Upon grape hyacinths, the coloured blur
> Of crocuses, the humming honied myrrh
> Of pussy-willows, daffodils where bees
> Come briefly, and a hundred hints like these
> Are yet superfluous when aspens silver.
> April has set a shining loveliness
> On field and street, but in high singing skies
> Is her consummate seal: so mixed with light
> The blue is sparkling gold, and holding less
> Of colour than of music—compromise
> Of elements, April's elusive right.

" Sonnets for Summer ":

> Stintless and unstaled the orchard trees,
> The garden and the meadow give their own;

Evening is full of promise ; noon is sown
Purple and gold, with seed in galaxies
Held close for coming springs ; even the breeze
Echoes the hive and tastes of honeycomb ;
Night has the smell of roses, red, full-blown ;
Beyond all these are nameless sorceries.

Still, underneath is knowledge half withheld
That summer has a harvest yet unripened—
Reaping to come a later season here,
After the fruit is garnered, the honey celled.
Nothing now, save the soil's recurring stipend
Gathered and binned. For soon the leaves grow sere.

" Sonnets for Autumn " :

Some Merlin has bewitched these autumn weeks :
The air is sparkling but a vague blue mist
Floats everywhere till tenuous amethyst
Lies softly on the hills, enfolds the peaks
And purple timber ; the swift-rushing creeks
Are silvered violet ; asters persist
In lavender profusion, eulogist
Of wine-warm paths my heart, bewildered, seeks.

This is an ancient quest—as old as war,
An old, old highway through the autumn trees
Hung richly, as with priceless tapestries—
And man still wondering what beauty's for :
It brings a frail and fugitive release.
Can Beauty ever lead him nearer peace ?

" Sonnets for Winter " :

Softly the winter closed, and snow like smoke
Trailed through the empty fields, the woods, and through
Empty garden plot. Far hills lay blue.
Petals of white now bloomed on elm and oak,
However strange such flowering, and broke,
Each gaunt, hard, ugly contour that we knew ;
No longer prodigal of scent and hue
Begotten of the sun, winter awoke.

Season of solitude. The log burns low,
The embers hold a hundred little fires
Rose-gold, and green, and violet, that burn
As quietly as outside drifts the snow.
No longer leap the flames of old desires.
The heart at peace looks on as seasons turn.

Effective and effecting are poems concerning "Czechoslovakia" and "Paderewski in September." We give the first part of "Czechoslovakia":

Little country broken—
knowing the yoke of centuries
yet unconquerably
yourself, and keeping
even through bitterness and weeping
the flame of freedom burning,
through wrong and oppression,
through massacre and the White Mountain,
through the bent spirit spurning
the treacherous peace, the inimical token.

Grace Noll Crowell is a writer rich through her life's experience who tells of it radiantly in her many books. The tenth, *The Radiant Quest*, (Harper and Bros.), is worthwhile. Readers of THE POETRY REVIEW will remember that Mrs. Crowell was appointed Poet Laureate of Texas by the State Senate in 1935 (September-October POETRY REVIEW, 1937). Furthermore, Mrs. Crowell was selected as The American Mother of 1938 by the Golden Rule Foundation and presented with a golden scroll of honour in 1938 by the Poetry Week Organization, and possesses three grown sons with honours of their own.

"Poetry to me," writes Mrs. Crowell, "is the very essence of life itself. One can take a good poem and immediately make it one's own if that poem speaks the truth in a beautiful, singing way. That is what a poem should always be: A SINGING THING —a song set down, perhaps laboriously by its author, and yet so released—so that it holds the feel of wings."

Let us read the title poem:

The lover of truth and beauty takes his way
Intent upon the radiance ahead.
His hunger clamours in him night and day,
And never is quite satisfied, quite fed;
His thirst cannot be quenched at any spring
That the earth will give him as its offering.

He follows a cloud by day, and a fire by night.
They go before him on the earth's worn sod:
The sun-shot pillar and the burning light
That hold the hidden form and face of God.
They will lead on, for his seeking eyes to see,
To the farthest outposts of Eternity.

In "Evening in the Fields," caught is the on-coming quiet of the night:

The fields are settling now to quietness:
The far-off sound of reaper sickles cease;
The last hymn-singing lark has trilled his psalm

To some high meadow god, and there is peace
And golden silence through the upright wheat
Where little running winds have played all day;
Now they have gone the way of all small winds,
Down some long windy way.

* * *

The old fields have grown cool and dark and still
After the long day's toil and yellow heat;
Men leave them now to God, and all night long
He walks among the wheat.

In the midst of the blaze of electric lights and the glow of the indirect lighting, it is good to find a poem celebrating candlelight: the first two and the last stanzas:

The candlelight of long ago
When the dark came down
Was beauty that our tired eyes
Needs now in every town.

A room that holds the golden flower
Of flickering candlelight
Has decoration quite enough
For any room at night.

* * *

It is a halo circling close
All beauty in its glow.
Ah, there is love of candlelight
In every heart, I know.

There is much that is interesting to tell about Jean du Boillier. In the Foreword to *Patterns of Dream*, (Rowney Press, Santa Barbara), Mr. Maurice E. Swan conveys some of the gifted characteristics of this poet. Mr. Swan draws a comparison between Robinson Jeffers and du Bouillier, another California poet, who lives in a house wrought by his own hands which took him seven years to make. The comparison is significant:

"The disparity of the poets is symbolized by the domiciles in which they live. Jeffers constructed his with huge stones with exact engineering knowledge, and du Bouillier built his with slats of crude wood, without the appurtenances of mathematics but with the same instinct that bees create a honey-hive. Du Bouillier's house is out of earshot of the restless sea and it canopies the eye with Eastern mystics, while Jeffers' is sunk partly in the Pacific and the walls are bare and northern; the tower where he sits and frets the night with his meditations, holds his eyes which look out to endless seas to Asia. Jeffers, like most moderns, is pessimistic and thinks he stands on the last frontier of Western Culture looking to Asia, the origin of our race, but du Bouillier sees no term-

ination; his outlook is a duration of good from the heavenly Father."

Speaking critically, Mr. Swan tells us:

"He (du Bouillier) leaves the assiduity of technique, and the contemporary mind grasping an eclectic world by empiricism and encyclopedias, to the uncertain ones, and sings the glory of God and Nature without weighing the measures on metrical instruments."

This poet enumerates the principles by which he has guided himself as an artist:

"I prefer rather to suggest than to write as I believe the higher degrees of beauty are apt to be found in forms that suggest rather than embody the ideal.

"I am happiest when I am working and to share with others the vision I have gathered out of phenomena surrounding me in my garden. The consciousness of life throbbing through me exalts the mind to express itself through my poetry, losing consciousness of time and space—and transfiguring the flesh I am to a living god—this is my living goal. Out of time and space I gather symbols of beauty which become permanent outside of time and space, eternal and everlasting. I believe grace is transitory motion and flowers from the spirit of the beautiful, and distortion springs from stagnation."

In this book we find musical scores. In the wealth of fantasy possessed by du Bouillier one is reminded of Oscar Wilde. The last third of this collection comprises short stories.

"My Guardian Angel," which follows, bears witness to the estimate of Mr. Swan on the poetry of Jean du Bouillier:

A silent companion walks beside me,
I hear his voice, yet he does not speak;
His heart is in the falling rains,
His breath is in the flowering trees.

I hear him whisper 'mid fallen leaves,
Amid the greenest foliage of Spring;
Deep in the earth I feel his presence;
I see him walking across the skies.

At early morn I hear him singing
Softly to the birds and flowers.
I feel the sympathy of his heart
Within the warmness of the sun.

Through time and space he guides my path,
He spreads his wings where'er I go;
Oft I walk through dangerous realms,
Yet of fear or weakness—I do not know.

A word about Mrs. Russell : Bayka Russell (Mrs. Walter L. Russell) was born in Texas, and has lived in St. Louis and New York ; for the past sixteen years she has been living in France, where she has homes in Paris and on the Riviera (near Cannes). Some years ago she was a contributor of articles to American magazines, but in the past few years she has devoted her writing talents exclusively to poetry.

A Vision at Versailles (Loker Raley, New York, N.Y.) is Mrs. Russell's second book : *Sonnets and Other Verses*, her first book, was published in Paris in 1936. A *Vision of Versailles*, which gives the title to this volume, is colourful and touching and is descriptive of the separation of lovers through war. In this sequence, Mrs. Russell brings to light the beauty and the tragedies known to Versailles. There follow sonnets celebrating the most interesting cities of the world : Budapest, Venice, Florence, Cairo ; we pause to read " Cairo " :

The sun sinks low and turns the sleepy Nile
Into a shining sheet of limpid gold ;
Beyond the Pyramids, the deserts hold
Their secrets of vast caravans where file
The solemn camels : silent, for awhile
The noisy natives as the shadows fold
The twilit world. The coming night is cold
With the deep chill of some false Pharaoh's smile.

And now the last gleam gently fades afar
While from my balcony, I see the moon
Hang like a curved silver scimitar,
Between two minarets. A piping tune
With drums and cymbals starts my evening dreams—
How distant all the west, my world, now seems.

I wrote Mrs. Russell that a word coming directly from her would interest our readers. She answers :

" Do you think they would care for the fact that my young daughter has gone with her ambulance to Finland and I, realizing that I can only pray for her safety, find great solace in writing and reading poetry, so that I call all poets, past, present and future, blessed ? I feel that Poetry and Beauty are sisters of Light and certainly needed in this weary, war-dimmed world."

We are interested in what anyone says about poets, but perhaps, more especially, what a poet says : " Where Poets Pass "—

I climbed a hill just as the evening sky
Embraced the gentle night. I watched the glow
Of tiny, tangled stars which tried to show
A steadfastness that ever must defy
The swiftly passing years. Again, on high
A sickle moon that seemed to softly throw

Her charm across the heavens, while below
A nightingale sang ; " Beauty cannot die."

Then through the shadowy sweet-scented air
I saw great poets pass through fancy's gates
And walk down ageless steps of time to where
The happiness of beauty ever waits.
There Simonides bowed to Baudelaire,
And Milton smiled to Browning and to Yeats.

The mind of man offers many interesting experiences. We have a sonnet sequence for consideration this morning written by Mr. H. Y. Ruskin—one wonders if he is related to the Ruskin that we all know—celebrating the romantic story of Feisal and Anita (Lockwood and Brynard, Hartford, Conn.). Their story resembles that of other great lovers, who loved not wisely but too well, and separated by a difference, a serious difference, in their background. The story unfolds, in Shakespearian style, through twenty-nine sonnets.

Mr. Ruskin has sent me a fine expression on poetry :

> " Poetry is the most exalted form of expression known to mankind. It is conceived in the poet's heart, gains its sustenance during its embryonic stage in his soul, and is finally delivered from his brain. Truly, Poetry is the beautiful offspring of the marriage of the Muse with a lonely heart."

King Feisal's life was linked with such great names as General Allenby and Lawrence. I heard something of it when I was in Jerusalem some time ago. We give the last sonnet :

Anita dear, Farewell ; and Feisal, Prince,
And Lawrence, too, Farewell—rest in God's Palms.
So great a love was ne'er express'd here since
The Man of Galilee was quoting Psalms
In lands you three so nobly strove to free.
Anita, sleep in peace. You did not die—
Your spirit visits scenes beneath the tree
Near Pera's shrine where both your parents lie,
And where you spent your life's most precious hours
With him whom you loved best. He loved you more
Than Fame itself—e'en more than Baghdad's towers :
When you went Home, his heart broke at its core.
The God of Love has called you to His side :
In perfect Peace you Sweethearts now abide.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

D. E. OSBORNE, Wakefield : THE POETRY REVIEW is one of the finer things of life, which I would not, on any account do without. I hope that you may be able to continue the publication throughout the war as you have splendidly done up to the present.

TRADITION AND UPHEAVAL

The beginning of the present century saw, in every branch of the arts, a heightening of the conviction that the variety of creative forms was becoming exhausted. This, furthermore, is a problem which has grown more and more acute as the century has progressed,—progressed from the material prosperity of the first fourteen years, through a world war of hitherto unimagined magnitude, two decades of uneasy peace which was little more than a preparation for the conflict which is now upon us and whose ultimate consequences are as yet wholly unpredictable.

Quite apart from this distressing background of external upheaval, the difficulties of the poet in coping with the advance of science, the eclipse of religious belief and the preponderance of materialistic values would have been considerable enough.

While Chaucer was faced with the problem of evolving a verbal medium in which to clothe the brain-children of his creating, with practically no established tradition of writing behind him, present-day poets and authors, and in their parallel spheres composers and painters and sculptors, feel they must invent an entirely new idiom if they are to avoid covering ground already too thoroughly prospected by innumerable predecessors.

This is one of the many problems to which Professor B. Ifor Evans applies himself in his new book, *Tradition and Romanticism* (Methuen, 6s.). He does not labour the distinction between Tradition and Romanticism, as the title might seem to imply. Indeed, he is at pains to prove that no such rigid distinction exists. " Throughout this study," he writes, at the beginning of his final chapter, " from Chaucer onwards, it has appeared that in English verse a certain compromise between extreme doctrines has existed." Romanticism is, in truth, a term which has frequently been used by pseudo-realists and ascetic rationalists as an Aunt Sally at which to fling their brickbats out of sheer spite, in an attempt to relieve their sense of frustration and inferiority.

Whereas the scope of his investigation does not permit the author to treat of the technical aspects of verse-making, many a contemporary poet, particularly the embryo poet, will benefit by a study of this book. For here he will find the long and chequered tradition of English poesy brought into perspective, the great English poets and their work reviewed against the background of the society in which they lived and the tendencies of their day. He will thereby gain some idea of the intricacies, pitfalls and responsibilities—above all, the responsibilities —of those who wish to follow in the steps of the masters.

Many a glib exponent of " modern verse " would do well to read, learn and inwardly digest the following passage from Professor Evans's book : " Further, it (the desire to break away from tradition) has led much modern verse to place an aggressive importance on technique, which arises not wholly from the poet's own necessities, but from a

desire to use a novel technique as a weapon against romanticism. Verse shall be made as intricate as possible, or alternatively as crude as possible, to defeat the lazy luxury of romantic vocabulary. A precedent for such a practice was found in Donne, and another in Browning, but it has been employed with an added wilfulness in the erection of a vocabulary which is only privately intelligible."

The author defends poetry from the unwelcome and mischievous attentions of categorizing enthusiasts, who force all writers and their works into arbitrary beds of Procrustes labelled " periods," " schools " and what-not, and neatly conveys the criterion of a work of art when he writes, " The only satisfactory criticism is not of an age or of a period, but of a single work of art, studied in relationship to all that is relevant for its interpretation." Altogether a stimulating and instructive book.

It is somewhat of a surprise to come upon the lines

" Change is the ringing of all bells of evil,
Good is a constant that now lies in your keeping "

in a poem by one who strives after novelty and seeks a break with tradition, which are but manifestations of the desire for change. But George Barker is such a poet, and the lines occur in his new collection of verse, *Lament and Triumph* (Faber and Faber, 6s.).

This volume distinguishes him clearly as a man who has thought much and deeply; yet it has to be admitted that he is not always as articulate as he is vital. The dynamic accents of his distinctly modernistic muse seem too often caught up in the wind-devils created by the unstable condition of his own cerebral functions, and the reader is left grasping at ideas which have not been brought properly into the focus of his vision.

With this type of verse " Is it good poetry? " is a question which cannot be answered with an unqualified affirmative or negative. Instead it is pertinent to enquire whether a sufficient number of readers or potential readers will feel disposed to disentangle meaning and so derive pleasure from so brazen a technique and so mazy an idiom.

Mr. Barker makes rare use of words, and has access to a rich vocabulary, which he often uses with telling effect. But this very glut carries him at times beyond the outposts of good judgment and good taste into the realms of mere verbal trickery. There is a tendency towards too frequent (and hence forced) internal rhymes, assonances, dissonances and other tricks of technique, so that these tend to become the author's masters, no longer his slaves. Such phrases, for instance, as " shaking a word's sword . . . and gloved with love," and " Telling me with a terrible bell Hell is my diurnal " are ugly and inept. What is one to make of this line :

" I not so fine and not so vivid whistle of heaven also to a cloud of crowd " ?

Against all this there must be set many passages from the opening

poem and elsewhere, which brand Mr. Barker as a poet who should be taken seriously, and who may yet produce work of the first order.

Space will only permit me to quote a few brief examples of his work at its best:

> "O level out the outrageous crags of hate
> To those great valleys where love can slant
> Like light at morning that restores the plant."

> "Not less strong than the indomitable rock,
> Not less lovely than the lake and the star,
> The wife of England roves the North,
> Among the derelict cities and the memories of war."

and the line, "I am Blake who broke my mind on God," which contains perhaps his most expressive metaphor.

E. Curt Peters.

AND THE LAST ROPE'S CAST OFF

MARKING for me, as it does, the end of a generation,
This death for me is more than a death.
This man who was never old, this friend, this kinsman,
Closed the house of my youth. They are gone.
There never will be any like them for me again.
Now I myself have entered among the oldsters to come.
I have swung out from shore now altogether.
I remember how the land looked and the quay
With the houses covering the hill.
They lasted as long as needed and longer.
I shall not see them again nor that shore.
I do not see land at all, nor anything but blue waters.
I have turned to whatever lies beyond,
Whatever I'm sailing to. I do not think I should pray
So clearly it's been revealed we have this gamut to run
Of what must happen to man, tender, cruel, the sun,
And whatever else is to come.
I am cut off now to my own day, my own age,
Alone as a lone cypress on a lone hill,
Except for the nerves, the body, blood,
From those of the past now gone,
And whatever of custom I hold to still.
Alone, let us turn to what will come.

Philadelphia, Pa. Harriet Plimpton.

YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton has named his new volume of poems *The Sober War* (Heinemann, 3s. 6d.). And sober, sombre is the atmosphere of the book, except for a few pieces in lighter vein. He is a well-known epigrammatist (he occurs in *The Week End Book*), and some of the epigram's polished point can sometimes be seen in his graver work. I doubt if any living poet is abler at " fitting aptest words to things." He has not given us any more poems in the interesting stanza-form which he himself recently devised. But he has, I regret, more than once tried his hand at that quasi-rhyming of which Auden and Co. are so fond, a system by which the final consonantal sounds are the same, but the preceding vowel-sounds must be different. " Dog-leg," " fat-rot," will illustrate the scheme which, I am sorry to see, Laurence Whistler sometimes follows. We tolerate the occasional use of rhymes that are not quite true. Thus Tennyson in the first quatrain of " In Memoriam " rhymes " love " with " prove," and Coleridge in " Kubla Khan " rhymes " far " with " war." But the habitual use of these quasi-rhymes is to some ears as offensive as a vile accent or an impediment in the speech. It is noteworthy that Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton is not represented in that blot upon the reputation of the Oxford University Press for books of scholarly workmanship, Yeats's *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. He shares this distinction with, for example, Alfred Noyes, Ruth Pitter, Lady Margaret Sackville, Lord Gorell, Lord Alfred Douglas, and Humbert Wolffe.

I extract the following remarkable paragraph from the introductory note to a volume, *Poets of Tomorrow*, just issued at 6s. by The Hogarth Press.

> " It is generally admitted that to embark upon the career of a poet to-day is to undertake a most foolhardy venture. There was a time, and not so very long ago, when editors and publishers eagerly printed any verse of even faint promise that came to their hands. And more, this poetry was not only printed, but read and bought—and even treasured against the day when a first edition would fetch high prices in the sales room. Since then a frost has set in; young poets look regretfully back to that period as a golden age which shows no signs of returning. A dozen different reasons are given for the change; some think the public has been surfeited, some that it is just one more symptom of the general crisis, others that the poets themselves have been to blame. Wherever the fault may be found to lie, the fact remains that so difficult has it become to gain a hearing, that many young poets have been discouraged before their talent has had a chance of flowering, and have turned to novel writing, to film work, to advertising, to any career that seemed to promise their poetic instincts even the most occasional and restricted kind of outlet. The result has been that English poetry has suffered sorely, and

as the process works in a vicious circle, poets have grown scarcer as the periodicals and publishers who were likely to print their work dropped out."

So the Hogarth Press proposes to publish volumes each containing the verse of four or five young poets. The book named above begins the series. But after more than one reading little abides in my mind beyond the remembrance that one of the poets writes smoothly and that one writes clumsy lines and has a sense of rhythm which allows him to rhyme "sympathy" with "lazy." One thing did strike me. More than one of these young men—they are all aged about twenty-five—is manifestly aware that he is living within the range of an approaching shadow. One of them, Ruthven Todd, tells of his gazing at a map and of his suddenly realizing that the map has become a war-map.

"Now is the future that I never wished to see.
I was quite happy dreaming and had no fear;
But now, from the map, a gun is aimed at me."

We elder folk should remember what has come upon the young men.

The title of this book reminds me of one published five years ago, called *Poems of Tomorrow*. In the September 1935 number of this Review it was given three separate and independent notices. Such titles are ill-chosen and ill-omened. For what about the day after tomorrow? By then the poems may be as dead as tomorrow's newspaper.

Mr. Ezra Pound has for years been engaged upon a vast work, called "Cantos" and spoken of with bated breath by his admirers. Messrs. Faber and Faber have just issued the latest instalment, a book of nearly 200 pages, giving us cantos LII to LXXI.

Well, here are two typical extracts:

Les pères Gerbillon, Fourtères, Bournat
took quinine to the palace, anno domini 1693
Hence the Jesuit church in Pekin in the Hoang Tchang
that is the palace enclosure.
And Feyenkopf in the Kaldan war
was fighting Eleutes and Mohamedans and the
Emperor shot six quail *de suite* with six arrows
and sent the Crown Prince an Eleute horse
saying: I don't know that chinese bean fodder will suit him.
Herewith some Kalkas sheep for prime mutton.
yr affectionate father KANG HI
Hoang Ho is frozen. In fact the Ortes country seems to be
pretty much as we thought it in Pekin.
small huntin' quite pleasant, a lot of pheasants and hares,
pasturage excellent. Hoang Ho fruz ½ a ft. thick.

This princess entered the palace when YONG TCHING was emperor

as " a young lady merely of talents
recited with beautiful voice
and had other amiable qualities "
concubine, and having a son was made queen
and for forty two years had seen him, this son,
on the first throne of Asia
in the 86th year of her age
posthumous EMPRESS
Hiao Ching Hien Hoang Héou
and her son as memorial
exempted his empire from the land tax
for a year as indeed he had done before on her birthdays
when she was 70 and when she reached her eightieth birthday
and now, in memoriam. And he wrote
a poem on the Beauties of Mougden
and condensed the Ming histories
literary kuss, and wuz Emperor
fer at least 40 years.
Perhaps you will look up his verses.

I desire to speak with all possible respect—though his antics certainly limit the possibility—of Mr. Pound. For in his young days he wrote some respect-worthy poems, and I am told that he has given generous encouragement to young poets. Perhaps this is why the publishers are able to quote several poets as praising the cantos in terms which would have seemed a little high if applied to *In Memoriam* or *The Ring and the Book*.

It is said that Swift reading in his old age *Gulliver's Travels* exclaimed: " God ! What a genius I had when I wrote that book ! " If those who in their callow youth extravagantly eulogized Mr. Pound happen, if or when they arrive at years of mature discretion, to read again their paeans of praise, I do not think that they will then repeat Swift's words.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

We expected Mr. Edward Shanks's *Rudyard Kipling* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) to be more compact and concrete as a study in literature and political ideas, It has occupied the author over the three troubled years since Kipling's death yet remains cursory, but happily not defamatory. Instead it interprets and refutes some of the many misinterpretations from which the great artist suffered. Of him as poet Mr. Shanks acknowledges that " he owned a lyre as well as a banjo and was quite capable of using either, according to the subject and his mood." He was anxious to preach in verse as well as prose the gospel of co-ordinated work, of discipline for useful ends, of the holiness of function. " He was always a didactic writer, a preacher, a moralist," who " preached love of England because he found that it fostered the growth of the virtues he regarded as necessary for the world."

IRISH POEMS AND PLAYS

Hawthorn Time in Ireland and Other Poems, by Plowden Kernan (Los Angeles), a collection of superiorly printed poems, is the work of an Irish poet. One feels instinctively that during the development of some of those conceits of thought he had unconsciously listened-in, so to speak, to the voice of the Gael, although their tones and rhythms do not possess the assonance so characteristic of Gaelic poetry. The poem that gives its title to the book relates to his motherland, which remains ever green in the memories of exiles, and he makes his poetic appeal to the hearts of others who like himself feel a similar nostalgic emotion. Thus emotion calls to emotion.

The fragrant earth was mystically still
Such breathlessness of beauty felt and seen!
The ages fell on me—
Where box and vine wove sacraments of green,
And hawthorns were content to steep their fill
Above the Irish Sea.

The fragrant earth was mystically still;
The hush of worlds upon a flower's face.
Silence—but not for long—
As if remembering that he loved this place,
A thrush renewed his joy to trill
His celebrating song.

Again in " Streets in Ireland " he reverts to past events in what is to this poet a far away land, and to what is a common spectacle in an Irish country town, or village, where sheep share with pedestrians the public by-ways,

Another poem is his recollection of the late W. B. Yeats which is an accurate description of a poet by a poet—tall, erect, gracious, Celtic in poetic temperament, and having had such largeness of vision as to have pierced the veil that divides this work-a-day world from some mysterious operation of the Infinite Mind which was known to ancient seers:

He stands erect with gentle mien,
As coming from a world unseen
The measures of his verses grow—
Enchantments in a silvered bow.
His hand perfects an accent's choice.
Beneath the music of his voice
In rhythmic cadence short or long—
His cogent eyes cleave through the veil
To shores where stands the mystic Gael.

" To Ignace Jan Paderewski " is a poem especially interesting at the present time, and should be quoted in its entirety.

We hear an echo rising from
the soil of peasant lands,
We feel a nation quiver,

We feel the tramp of baffled hosts
in the rhythm of your hands!

Three Plays by Teresa Deevy (Macmillan) were performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1935 and 1936, and to me as an old Abbey Theatre-goer they have a personal interest, having known some of the Abbey playwrights, with one of whom I collaborated in a novel published by Simpkin Marshall some years ago. I also knew some of the chief actors. The first of these plays is the best. The young girl Katie Roche is a good character study of one with a strange impulsive nature being the outcome of two inherited instincts, one to be grand and above her position as a mere companion-help, and the other a form of saintism. She proves to be the illegitimate daughter of the scion of "grand people," who is one of the characters and deus ex machina, and appears not as a holy Joe, or a Stiggins, but as a genuine penitent for a misdeed of his past life, and who understanding her waywardness helps to subdue it, and this leads to an inevitable ending. The second play is no more than a sketch depicting an incident occurring on a road, and which relates to a working-class community. The third play is a historic drama dealing with those old unhappy days in Ireland of religious intolerance and political oppression. These are not poetical plays in any sense of that term, as everything points to the sober fact that romantic Ireland is a thing of the past, and the stage must itself be a mirror of contemporary life, and in no way distorted by romanticism, consequently poetry and romance if presented to matter-of-fact people they will regard such simply as perverted conceptions of worldly events. The plays display both dramatic ability, and clever characterization.

The poems contained in *The Gap of Brightness* by F. R. Higgins (Macmillan) are distinct from any I have read by modern Irish poets, as well as calling to my mind many of those lyrical poems written centuries ago by Gaelic poets, many of whose names are unknown at the present period. Yet through that continuity of inspired song a poetic stream has trickled down the centuries from one great fountain head of Bardic culture in past ages, which has never ceased to flow.

F. R. Higgins in his poetry bears an analogy to those Gaelic-speaking peasants, hedge-schoolmasters, and others who were all true poets of Irish birth and descent, and were in many respects hereditary bards, who carried on the ancient traditions through centuries of oppression, suppression and spoilation. He is also Gaelic in other respects, being largely influenced by the Gaelic language, and has followed to a certain extent the Gaelic consonated system of rhyming, particularly apparent in "A Vision of Paradise Park," which is "written after the old Irish," and he in addition makes use of internal assonance in his verse according to the same system. He is moreover well versed in Celtic lore, and sings of Hy Breasail, that phantom island in the

Western Ocean beyond the setting sun. This the old voyagers are supposed to have seen, and he asks if it was

Some phantom of wind and wave?
Yet for it we'll brace each spar,
Climbing strange waters with
The mind's magnetic compass,
Oh, fooled by Time's cold star!

And yet Bran of ancient song, Maelduin whom Tennyson made famous in his pageantry of glowing verse, and Brendan, the saint, who with others

told of holy islands,
Where God sang in a lull—
Of icebergs, where Iscariot
Takes holidays from hell

were perhaps right after all, for he has written thus, taking that magic island as a symbol—

I'll slip from earth's green moorings,
And over its cabled light,
Hailing no starboard glow
Till, feathering our oars, we softly
Port in a blaze of light.

He makes songs upon strange and out of the way subjects. Indeed, few poets would take a blackthorn stick—although a treasure to be prized by many a countryman—a gallivanter to his boats, a gallows tree, as inspiring subjects. I could pick out several which for originality would be difficult to beat—for example, a man of seventy, fearing death, mumbles a prayer, gazes upon the picture of the Virgin and Child above his bed,

And as he mouths Time's lullabies, his beads
Barely keep count of prayers in yawned retreats;
And so from floor and stool old shadows creep.
With crickets ticking out the time of sleep.

Many of the poems are filled with the true Celtic spirit of exuberance, sentiment and sadness, such as in old folk tales, passionate love songs, jovial ditties in main of feasting, drinking and courting, and alas! with mournful strains of lyric sweetness, all bringing hints of that ancient poetic fire which had smouldered beneath the dust of centuries. The song-lyric "Grace Before Beer" reminds us of Carolan, the last of the Irish bards, whose "laugh was a tinkle of glasses," and who wrote an ode to whisky, and who, as Goldsmith has recorded, kissed a bowl of usquebaugh, his inspiring friend, lovingly before he died.

I have met F. R. Higgins, and know that he actually dislikes what is conventional in poetry, that is to say exactness in scansion, technical control in the manner of versification, and all formal symmetries in poetic structure and his work leaves an impression that he is endeavour-

ing to bring about a heretical reaction in Anglo-Irish poetry. The poet employs images which have an unique flavour such as "The windy fidgets of September grass," "In the split shadow of a bush," "Peaks, horned with frozen brightness" and many others. Æ discovered his poetic genius not alone from a human standpoint, but from an abstract one, his own esoteric experiences, and I who knew that deceased poet can thoroughly endorse his discrimination.

H. T. Hunt Grubb.

Miss Alberta Vickridge's reputation as poetess and editor, printer, and publisher of her own verse quarterly, *The Jongleur*, which maintains a high standard, is a guarantee that in *Over the Moon* (Beamsley House, Bradford, 2s. 6d.) will be found real poetic impulse expressed in distinguished and ably-constructed verse. Many of these poems are astronomical; indeed the author has made star-poetry particularly her own, and it is perhaps the aloofness of the stars which has given much of her work a detachment which in these chaotic days is only too refreshing.

Miss Vickridge relates astronomy not only to her own experience and individual entity, but also to those of her fellow men and women. The glitter and glory of the star-sown firmament are here, wedded to choice and suitably austere language, and Miss Vickridge plays with the beauty of the names of stars as effectively as poets in all times have played with those of classical persons and places. The other poems in this book mainly express the author's reactions to the world of nature.

Homage to Cheshire, by Hedley Lucas (1s.), is a collection of verses of no great profundity but of real grace and charm, in which a seeing eye has mirrored and fixed some of the beauties it has loved. The Cheshire meres and hills, Bowdon Vale, Crewe with the "Rocket" vane, slanting sunlight and slanted rain, the "Timbered houses, black and white" even the Cheshire cat—all are on this varied and colourful palette. There are times when one feels that the author's love for his subject has engendered a dangerous facility; but Cheshire at least should have a welcome for the book, nor lesser counties disdain it.

John Betjeman, in *Old Lights for New Chancels* (John Murray) has occasional doses of satire injected in his frolics and light verse, but he is most happy in his topographical poems, in defence of which he writes in a happy preface: "Until the middle of the nineteenth century poets who wrote in the visual manner confined themselves for the most part to descriptions of nature. This was because natural scenery was more in evidence than it is now. The tradition has died hard. Poets who have been brought up in the country are entitled to write on these subjects, for they are their natural visual outlet. That is why the nature poetry of Edmund Blunden, dusted over with Bewick-like imagery and scenes of Clare and Crabbe, reads so true among the pastoral poems of to-day.

" Similarly Hardy is the poet of the small provincial town. When he looks at the country it is from over the laurel bushes of his Dorchester villa and somewhere at the back there is tea ready and a front room crowded with furniture. When he looks at London, it is as someone with a return ticket in his pocket. It may not be consciously that he does this, but there are a hoof-beaten High Street, gas-lights and a local journal, a Corn Exchange and a branch railway-line as a hinted background to most of his more moving poems. . . . Tennyson, another acute observer, saw England from the Rectory Library or out on the gravel above the arboretum, or up in the family museum, or where the pines rock at the bottom of the garden. He knew, with sagacity like that of a good incumbent, the characters of country people and I know of no better descriptions of a farmer than that of Farmer Philip in *The Brook*.

" I could multiply instances of this sort of topographical observation in poets, *ad infinitum*. It is in the English or Irish background which certain poets write against that endears them to me. It has made Browning unsympathetic to me, Shelley seem pompous and bombastic beside the transformation scene imagery of Keats' and his London pleasure at a summer holiday.

" Sometimes the poets I admire never directly hint at their background or age, but they are so saturated in it that they do not have to hint. I find, with this absurd topographical predilection, hardly any pleasure in the Elizabethans, less in the seventeenth century (but this may be due to excessive reverence for those ages from unsympathetic ' tutors ') and almost the only early poet I can enjoy is Chaucer. In the eighteenth century, Dr. Watts, Swift, Robert Lloyd, Thomson, Dyer, Shenstone, Mickle, Cowper and Burns are easily among my favourities, not for their finer flights, but for their topographical atmosphere. In the nineteenth century Crabbe, Praed, Hood, Clare, Ebenezer Elliott, Capt. Kennish, Neale, Tennyson, Charles Tennyson Turner, Clough, William Barnes, Meredith, William Morris and a score or so more. I find great pleasure in what is termed minor poetry, in long epics which never get into anthologies; topographical descriptions in verse published locally at Plymouth, Barnstaple, Ipswich or Northampton, Mullingar, Cork, Dublin, Galway."

Margaret E. Stringer voices the poet's consciousness in a poem called " The Minor Poet," though her book *In A Green Land* (Talbot Press, 3s. 6d.) is chiefly concerned with well-loved and beautifully described scenes in Ireland :

I am a Minor Poet,
And I go humbly, knowing certainly
That this is all I am, and nothing more.
Yet am I of the seed
Of an Immortal breed,
Since I must speak (only in my degree)

In some such language as they speak to me.
How very small, how far away, I seem
From those who light the firmament—whose voice
Calls, like a trumpet, all men to rejoice.
Hearing that call, I too rejoice! My dream
Is one with theirs. My candle-wick aspires
With the sharp pinnacles of their flaming fires!
I can perceive their sacrifice—can guess
The torments they endured, the loneliness,
The death they died in seeking to express
What language cannot say—when symbols show
But shadows of celestial loveliness!
These things I surely know. . . .

The Quintessence of Literature, by H. L. Dixon, M.A. (privately printed) is in its aim a useful book, purporting to give a summary of the best books of the world's literature. In a small volume of less than 150 pages such a summary must needs be very compressed and the comments brief. The foreign sections are serviceable and concise in this respect, giving the most famous books of each country, but the English section is unfortunately less satisfactory. In it the lists of recommended books and authors are given only an occasional date for guidance and the cataloguing is one of amazing unorderliness, as if the compiler's enthusiasm had raced away with his pen. Comments too are often arbitrary in judgment and misleading in importance of detail, Shelley, for instance, being dismissed with the phrase " famous for his ' Ode to a Skylark ' " while " Gone with the Wind " of Margaret Mitchell has the whole story epitomized. Very few contemporary poets are recognized. Yet the book has some stimulating surprises and often gives interesting and unfamiliar details of people and places. It is a pity that the excellent type of the book should be marred by many glaring printer's errors, and one cannot help questioning the wisdom of the compiler in inserting samples of his own poems, competent though they are, among the " deathless graces " of the Immortals.

The Rev. T. Pittaway establishes a further claim as a poet of religious verse in his newest volume *St. Kenelm and Other Poems* (Favil Press, 3s. 6d.). In his legends, lyrics and sonnets the moral is pressed home with efficiency as well as with faith. There is individual thought brought to the old truths in such a poem as " My Ways Are Not Your Ways " :

God walls the sea with sand
And clears the air with storms,
In winter's cold the land
With velvet snow He warms.

So in the world of grace
He brings to deserts rain
Not from some moistened place
But from the flinty plain.

Stout Jericho's firm walls
With horns he overthrows ;
For sling and stone He calls
To conquer Israel's foes.

Christ tried the self-same way,
Endowed with Spirit's might,
Of spittle He made clay
To give a blind man sight.

Sanctity by Violet Clifton (Sheed and Ward 3s. 6d.) is a religious drama on the life of St. Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary. The beauty of her human and spiritual life is treated with an artist's skill and a believer's fervour, the whole resulting in a dramatic and moving piece of work. The poetic tensity of the " Chorus Mysticus " is relaxed sufficiently to make the dialogue sound natural but is never relinquished altogether, and tightened as occasion demands.

Religious experience is also the theme *Milord and Other Poems* by Margaret Chadwick (Heath Cranton, 7s. 6d.). They are brave who venture to share their subjective crises with others, and it takes a poet's craftsmanship as well as his sensibility to do so. This author is as yet unable to do justice to her theme ; a style that is sometimes facile and sometimes forced, and a heavy sprinkling of italics, lack the power and restraint that soul-revealing demands.

Phoebe Hesketh—known to POETRY REVIEW readers as Phoebe Rayner—brings her grace of thought and phrase to describe and interpret nature in *Poems* (Sherratt and Hughes, 3s. 6d.). They are delicate lyrics, not only sensitive to the loveliness of the changing seasons but also to the passions of mankind and " the sacrament of beauty in His hands." Winter has a particular inspiration for her, as poems like " First Snow " and " Winter Trees " show, and the challenging storms of Autumn and March :

Hear the challenging ring
From March to Spring !
For iron-shod his charioteers ride
The pleading countryside,
Not soft of foot they touch the youthful grass
But armed and speared and helmeted they pass. . . .

Earth withstands the rout
And pushes out
Each tender bud and blade, each shoot and sheath

Protected underneath
To break and thrust fulfilling life begun—
And warring March retreats before the sun.

But she strikes her deepest note in "Rainbow," with its concluding lines:

I knew the price of life so hardly bought
To satisfy the appetite for gold
That blackens valleys rich in precious corn,
For many there walk barefoot, hungry, cold.
Green land, green trees and young most tender grass
Are won with steel, yet yield their sweet reward
To him who digs and sows with gentle hands,
Whose plough is red with earth, with rust his sword.

The book is beautifully printed.

Winter is also a favourite theme of Benn Sowerby, whose poems, *No Garland* (Williams and Norgate 2s. 6d.), are incisive and arresting. They are often written in that most effective form of free verse where the iambic foot controls but does not usurp the metre, while rhymes, where used, come at unfixed intervals. "Earth," written in a closer pattern, is particularly rich in significance:

I am old, sapless, and shrunken,
unsteady, dim-eyed.
I cannot remember the lustre
of a girl's pride.

The seed of my womb is scattered,
the weak grown strong.
My days that once went swiftly
limp and are long.

There is no light in the body
when the fire of lust
sinks and the wind wanders.
My body sifts out in dust—

dust of the earth that is mounded
in hummocks over the plain
too dry and hard for the softening
of winter rain.

But new power is stirring
in me, furrowed and lean,
for the soil lives in the wrinkles
where the iron has been,

and out of the barren furrow
will thrust new grain
when the fresh-turned earth that bore me
subsides again.

Here are four books of verse, two hailing from the Dominions, one from India and one from Sweden. *The Pavement Artist* (Hutchinson), is a volume of light verse written by Ella Grainger, Swedish wife of Percy Grainger, the Australian composer. It has a glowing Foreword by Douglas Sladen who has known the charming author since her youth and tells us that she is also a painter. Possibly the art of painting, which has a universal language, is a better medium for Mrs. Grainger than a tongue that is not her own, but Mr. Sladen recognizes that these verses give the most original philosophy in rhyme.

P. R. Kaikini, Indian author of *Shanghai* and other poems (New Book Co., Bombay), is an ambitious, sensitive and vigorous poet. He has plenty to say and he says it with force and fury. Free verse is no doubt the right vehicle for this young Jehu, though a more generous use of punctuation would have made his meanings plainer. Mr. Kaikini is full of rebellion against the wrongs and sorrows of the world; his scorn and anguish are poured out in such poems as "Foundry," "The Millionaire," and the title-poem. These are not poetry in the sense understood by this reviewer, but they have force and feeling, and poetry itself is found in such stanzas as

> "We are escaping
> We are racing away
> Smothers and thunder-struck
> From a land
> Where always is
> Dark lingering twilight
> Where no bird sings
> No farmer cultivates his land
> For all his land lies waste
> No corn is sown
> Ripened or reaped."

Or

> "Time was when we wandered by starlight
> Closing the weary traveller's eyes with a magic weed,
> Casting beautiful dreams into children's sleep,
> Carrying bundles of comets like faggots in our hands."

Mr. Kaikini is worth watching.

New Zealand Poems (George Allen & Unwin) by Eileen Duggan are published in honour of the Centennial of the Dominion of New Zealand and are a suitable tribute to the glories of that country, its natural beauty, the valour and dignity of the Maoris, the purpose and courage of its discoverers and conquerors. All these are honoured in many poems, some of which savour rather too much of the catalogue or history lesson for true poetry, but others rise to heights of real beauty: these musical lines, for instance,

> "There are so many caves on either shore
> That here and there arises through the ground,

A phantom sighing and a ghostly roar
As if the very earth's a-hum with sound.
Through our thin coasts these far sea-rumours well,
And their dismay that wanders to and fro
Is like the fox-glove's moan, now loud now low,
As if the bee were lost within the bell."

Miss Duggan has imagination, feeling, and often a new turn of phrase or arresting symbol; there is the impact of a new, strong country in her verse, and the strength of the wild waters that flow round the shores of New Zealand is shown in such poems as *Titahi Bay*. There is fine workmanship as well as wisdom and beauty in her "Ode" to her country, and the book is worth more than a paper binding.

A collection of sonnets, *From the Canadian Prairies* by Phyllis Comyn Clarke (Heath Cranton), flow along smoothly enough, but with nothing specially new or remarkable in them to lift them beyond the level of magazine verse. Mrs. Clarke is less concerned with the beauties and differences of her country than with the experiences of the human heart. She tells with tenderness a tale familiar to all writers in the sonnet "An Empty Garment" when

"A naked thought came, trembling, to be gowned. . . .
I sought fair phrase to drape its grace aright,
And while I strove, in tender mood, to bind
In flowing words the faint, diaphanous strands,
I tried to glimpse its face, but it took fright,
And, sighing, thought my scrutiny unkind,
And left the garment, empty, in my hands."

And the poise, daring and independence of a mountain goat is well shown in the lines which describe the kid on its high rock and end:

"You stand, sure-footed, on the world's cold rim,
Challenged by Life, daring to challenge him!"

The Sesame Books (Faber 2s. 6d.) will be best-sellers among contemporary poetry for the four volumes now ready provide in handy form 80 pages each of the selected poems of T. S. Eliot, Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, who cannot be ignored whatever our opinions and predelictions may be. Here is an opportunity of becoming comparatively well-acquainted with their work. which deserves intensive study before being ruthlessly criticised, Here are the actual foundations of a preponderating type of modern verse: are they solid or sandy? The Eliot is particularly revealing for newcomers to his work: it begins with "Prufrock" and by way of "The Waste Land" and "Ash Wednesday" ends with extracts from "The Rock." Some of the more familiar Spender poems are missing from his volume which with Auden's *Some Poems* should be read with the articles of discovery by Michael Roberts in THE POETRY REVIEW ten years ago as an interpretative introduction.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Our awards are given in three cases to the authors of lyrics. Two of these resemble each other in type, and both are written with deep feeling and a skill which has adapted the manner perfectly to the matter. One is called " Requiem " and the other " Submarine," but it would be possible to give the same title to both. A comparison would be interesting. Walter Burton has written a longer poem, which is very well sustained, witty and imaginative.

The Premium is allotted to Irene Chapman Benson, Winnipeg; Lettice Haffenden, Shermanbury; Charles Woodhouse, Haslemere; Walter Burton, Burton-on-Trent.

Amongst the contribution " Highly Commended " especial mention must be made of Marguerite Edgelow and Roberta Shuttleworth.

Highly Commended:

Rachel E. Boulton, Winscombe; T. E. Casson, Ulverston; N. K. Cruickshank, Liverpool; Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross; I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol; Christine Henderson, Montreal; Christmas Humphreys, London; W. Skene Laurence, London, W.; J.W. Nicholson, Shildon, Durham; G. S. Oddy, Ryde; E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles; P. E. Proctor, London, S.W.; Phoebe Rayner, Rivington; Joyce T. Rowe, London, N.; Roberta Shuttleworth, Guildford; Brenda F. Skene, London, W.; Margery Smith, Nottingham; Arthur Lynnford Smith, Wanstead; Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary.

Commended:

Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford; Enid W. Barry, Highgate; Alan Cavalier, Kenninghill; Lottie Cole, Broadway; A. H. Cordwell, Worthing; Reginald C. Eva, Hove; E. M. Fison, Oxford; Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth; M.J.L., Guildford; P. E. Leaver, Witham; E. Kathleen Rosche Mason, Walsall; G. Mullins, Burnham; Ierne Ormsby, Thurgoland; T. Pittaway, Frome; Frances Paul, London, S.W.; Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri; G. D. Reeves, Highgate; Dorothy Round, Bishop's Stortford. Mary Grayson Smith, Ringwood; D. E. Christine Tomlin, Goole; Dorothy Trail, Vancouver; Fulgence Wormhole, London, S.E.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach " The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1." by June 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry

Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

Contributors are reminded that all poems published in THE POETRY REVIEW this year, whether accepted as ordinary general contributions or by way of the Premium competition will be considered for the McCallum Smith annual honours award, now increased to £10.

Robert J. Southey (not yet eighteen) is just entering Trinity College, Melbourne University. He is a great-great-grand-nephew of Robert Southey, the former Poet Laureate. The appended verses were part of a submission by him for the English Poem Prize (1939) at the Geelong Grammar School. This was awarded to him.

The verses "Wilson's Promontory" describe a conspicuous headland jutting into the Southern Ocean from the Victorian coastline. Being the most southerly point of the Australian mainland, it is a well-known mariners' mark on the voyage to and fro between Melbourne and Sydney.

Thrust forth into far seas
Creamy with spray;
Scoured clean by the sharp breeze,
Washed by the bay.
Sirmio's peer in the green deep
Margined with sand,
Jutting guardian, black keep
Flung from the land,
Gold-crowned by the lost sun
Sunk in the straits,
Dark-tressed where the trees run
Thick from thy gates.

Lo! darkness falls, mist-borne,
Blanketing night,
Unpierced till the high dawn
Sheds its delight.

The British Authors' Press is compiling an Anthology of Empire Verse, for which contributions are being collected from writers of poetry, both traditional and modern, throughout the Empire. The proceeds, after meeting production expenses, will be given to the Red Cross, but royalties will be paid to the authors represented, and reckoned as part of the production expenses. Poems have already come in from Mr. John Masefield, Lord Gorell, Mr. Ernest Rhys, Mr. Christopher Hassall and other well-known English writers. While only poets of established reputation are being invited, others may have their work accepted for the Anthology, if it reaches the standard required. They may submit verse through the Short Poem

Competition announced in the *British Annual of Literature*, published by the British Authors' Press (last date for sending-in, June 1st, 1940, or, for competitors from overseas, December 15th).

Mme Evelyn Couchman, Menton A.M., France: I write the little I am able to write now in intervals of strenuous work for the French Red Cross. One of the things that has helped me more than anything is the courage and vision of your various articles on art as a sacred calling, most especially now in this terrible conflict between the powers of Good and Evil. "The Master Builders" by Dallas Kenmare, your current issue should serve, not only a as solemn Call, but also as an inspiring incentive to all genuine artists to rise above the horror of the "violation" of war, to uphold the torch of Truth in this universal "dark night of the soul," never forgetting that pride in his high calling must be combined with humility in himself, and the return to the "power (of) white simplicity."

Henry Harrison, Poetry Publisher, New York, takes exception to certain statements in Kunigunde Duncan's article, "The State of Poetry in America," in our March-April issue:

Miss Duncan claims there are more than fifty magazines here devoted entirely to verse. That just isn't so. "Half a dozen volumes coming every month from the publishers" and "of published books, I have read perhaps two-thirds." In 1939 there were 698 *new* books of poetry and drama published in America, of which it is reasonable to assume that at least 550 were poetry. That isn't half a dozen volumes per month, and that means Miss Duncan didn't read perhaps two-thirds of them.

"Free verse has the centre of the stage." A reading of the published (and unpublished) poetry of America will reveal that free verse is glad to be *on* the stage.

"One especially enterprising racketeer not long since completed an anthology for each of the states—and banked more than a million." I take it that Miss Duncan alludes to me. That I banked more than a million is delightful news—and I wish it were true. My financial situation is nobody's business but Uncle Sam's, but if any poetry publisher, ethical or racketeering, can ever make more than an acceptable living, I'll cancel my experience of twenty years in poetry (fourteen of them as a poetry publisher) and start all over again.

"Fortunately, these books are not circulated outside the contributors' circles of acquaintance." How would Miss Duncan possibly know unless she examined the book-keeping of the publisher? Such a statement is on its own face absurd.

"One magazine sponsored a broadcast for several years. This Columbia feature netted . . . just forty tons of poetry. The best, of course, after being read over the air, or published in the magazine, is now out in anthology form, for which the writers of it pay at so much

the page." This is the most amazing distortion of facts in the article. No magazine sponsored a broadcast. It wasn't the Columbia Broadcasting System but the National Broadcasting Company, and the broadcaster, Ted Malone, did not charge the poets included *anything*. P.S. I am not the publisher of Mr. Malone's anthology.

Mr. HAROLD GOAD writes from Fiesole: It is such a joy and consolation just now to turn to poetry. I lecture to the University students in Florence on the "Pre-Romantic Poets"—from Lady Winchelsea to Blake and Cowper, taking one poet every week, though Gray and Collins needed two apiece,—and I have just been on a tour of the other newly-founded British Institutes, giving a memorial lecture upon Robert Browning, and soon I am to go round again, talking perhaps on Shelley, but I feel shy of such a big subject. The Italian students always like one to speak of a poet whom they know at these public lectures and one usually has a good audience—over a hundred. There are now 800 Italian students in Rome, 400 in Milan, 250 in Genoa, 200 in Naples and 400–500 in Palermo—the latest-born, but one of the most flourishing of the "Branch" institutes that I planned and in some cases founded and kept alive for a year or so, until this last year the British Council came to the rescue and refounded them with lavish funds. It's nice to think that nearly 2,500 Italians, young men and women, are coming to learn our language at this crisis,—though, of course, the standard in the other institutes is hardly up to that of the Florence School yet. Poetry read in a foreign tongue is always difficult for any student to follow.

Alas! I'm afraid the pleasant tours of The Poetry Society to Italy are impossible just now. But I feel that those you accompanied really did good work in promoting Anglo-Italian understanding. In Poetry we all find common ground, however much we may differ in political outlook. I am quite sure that poetry is the best "propaganda," and that the Institutes are the best instruments after all—if politicians would only see it.

I am so glad the Society is going on so well and publishing such consolation, as these numbers of THE POETRY REVIEW are.

P.C.40 is a bi-monthly bulletin of poetry by soldiers—*poètes casques*—under the editorship of M. Pierre Seghers, himself a serving soldier. Each number begins with homage to a soldier-poet of the last war and continues with contributions from the Forces of to-day. The current number pays homage to the American poet, Alan Seeger, who was killed in 1916, and includes some of his poems, with translations. There are also poems, with translations, by the Polish poet, Jerzy Paczkowski. The editor hopes to include poems by British soldiers in later issues. Subscriptions to the ordinary edition—at 75 fr. a year for France and 100 fr. for other countries—should be made to the editor, 947, Cie. Tracteurs, C.M. Artillerie No. 15, par Nîmes.

THE DEATH OF JACOB PENNYCUICK

WHEN Jacob Pennycuick lay dying
He opened half an eye,
One morning when the greenish pane
Was green with April and slant rain,
And saw that he would die.

So all that night from foolish dreams
He struggled gasping up,
And fumbled for the candlestick
And his reviving cup,
And lay back in the furtive light
To get the books of living right,
And wind the business up.

" Six and forty years ago
I swindled a fool brother,
And thought myself well paid although
A sweetheart and a mother
Disowned me at one blow.

" Forty is it ? fifty years
I've woven the one skein,
Scorned everything the world holds good,
Turned everything to gain,
War and panic, everything,
To my own private gain.

" A miser, so.—— A little boy
Comes back into my mind,
' Is he a miser ? ' whispering—
Am I a ghoul, a kind
Of monster to the people then ? . . .
Turned everything to gain !

" Yet how could their long hate but serve
To harden my one thought ?
The love of neighbours being trash
I burned to barter it for cash.
I burned, until my heart was ash—
But where's the thing I bought ? "

All night beneath his sum of years
In that vibrating gloom
He drew the bold, concluding line
And reckoned up the sum,
And always for Grand Total
A row of noughts would come.

He had his sloven housekeeper
Bring him pen and ink.
One evening as he mumbled there
His nephews stamped the naked stair
And stood at his bed's brink.

"Your father was my enemy.
I do not ask for friends.
Yet think it, since you will, I wrote
To make you some amends.

"Seven thousand pounds in coin,
Bar-gold and precious stone,
Tonight in these dumb walls are lying,
And every penny will be mine
While I have strength to groan.

"But when they put me out of mind
And in a hole to rot,
Sneak back into the room below
And feel into the chimney, so,
And find a narrow slot.

"Take it! Fling it as you will
To publican and whore,
Let it buy you all the joys
It never bought before!
Spend, until the act begets
Such a sloth in you, it sets
You begging, door to door!"

They turned with one unlikely thought,
  They hardly touched the stair.
He heard them in the room beneath,
And the little hinge that grit its teeth,
  But yielded in despair.

"Robbers! Devils! I am old——"
  Jacob Pennycuick
Plunging in the dingy bed
  Flung the candlestick,

Spraying matches through the air,
  Futile as his words:
Fixed his listening, wild eyes
  Upon the harmless boards.

Up for answer came one laugh
  Through the knotty floor:
Twice the tinkle of a coin:
  Once a closing door.
  No sound more.

Jacob Pennycuick lay still
  Wagging his white chin
In the shadow where the curtain,
Yielding to a touch uncertain,
  Let oblivion in.

Gutted in one flash of anger
  Gone was all his strength,
Struck and cancelled like a match,
  And he was calm at length.

Calm, and through his whirling brain,
  Half awash with night,
Presently there broke indeed
  A kind of dawn of light,
  A kind of dream delight!

Always to that jewelled chimney
Shackled, what a clod was he!
Fifty was it? or five hundred
Years of grovelling slavery?
Now of seven thousand gained,
Millions was it? there remained
Nothing. He was free.

Day was ending in the clamour
And long shadow of the hill,
Far away a blackbird carolled
Whose estate was nil,
Then another pauper whistled
Hard beneath the sill.

Tendrils from the tumbling garden
Scribbled the low pane.
Hidden was the tumbled garden
But that hill was plain,
With its daffodils withdrawn
Into a dimming stain.

O Lenten lilies of the field
That neither toil nor spin,
Solomon would give his shekels
For so brave a skin!

When the careless throat was silent,
That gold also lost,
Pennycuick, his eyes upraising,
Lay like some explorer gazing
At an unknown coast;
And his smile all night above him
Hovered like a ghost.

LAURENCE WHISTLER.

POETRY IN TIME OF SUSPENSE

POETRY, that intense ecstatic perception of what Life *is*, brings us with its guesses within the light of a truth that only can be guessed. Poetry is reality. If it were not for *King Lear* and the *Agamemnon*, there would be no coherence in human destiny. If it were not that poetry is less perishable than empires, Rome and Babylon and Greece would have no more significance for us than the Ice Age. As we grow wiser we no longer seek for happiness, we seek for richness of experience; and a man, looking back over his days at the end of them, will discover that happiness is only a far irrecoverable echo, and that his mind is stored not with remembrance of old pleasures but solely with those hours in which, by some miraculous accident, a reality larger than his world has made his world significant.

The laying up for ourselves of that treasure in heaven is a secret and powerful urge, which must find its outlet through some creative passion or perish. And if the love and understanding of poetry goes from a nation, something much more than a graceful festoon on the façade of civilization goes with it. "Poetry fetter'd fetters the Human Race." In other words, a people no longer in touch with reality through its creative artists is spiritually dead.

War, which used once to be a kind of gigantic Eton and Harrow match, in which spectators comfortably behind the lines hissed or applauded the Old School Flag, has become the gravest threat civilization has ever faced. It sends its Jane Austens shopping with their gas-masks and its Wordsworths cantering over the Downs with the Cumberland (mechanized) Light Horse. A threat to civilization is a

threat to those creative arts, without which there is neither dignity nor significance in the life of man. And now, more urgently than at any time during the last thousand years, we are faced with a choice between an ending and a beginning, or as Laurence Whistler puts it, between the Quick and the Dead :

> Let us remember in this Gothic Age
> Others, the secret agents of the Quick,
> Each bent upon some private sabotage
> Of Death : the brilliant healer of the sick,
> The craftsman excellent in stone and brick,
> The unknown artist, the retiring wife—
> All wills conscripted on the side of Life.
>
> For we are born to see, there is no doubt,
> Eclipse of beauty in a world's disgrace,
> With many candles of the mind put out
> And mad defiling of the Holy Face.
> There is no choice : it is the soldier's case.
> But on your heart the secret may be read
> Which company you follow : Quick or Dead.

Values are always distorted by War, and poetry always in danger of being submerged. All mass-movements are necessarily simplifications : for, unless you separate things neatly into right and wrong, friend and foe, all black and all white, you lose the motive power of individual purpose. It is the creative artist alone who can keep an unfailing knowledge of the truth that war obscures : and even he is too seldom given enough peace to find sincerity. War mars poets, it does not make them. It has become too big to be seen, and, until some poet a hundred years away looks down the other end of Time's telescope, it will remain inarticulate. The attitude expressed in those few poems born of the last two years of desperate unease is one of a tragic acceptance of something so huge and deadly that it seems less the deliberate work of man than an inevitable, satanic and cyclic upheaval. War has become an experience of which only the merest fragments can be made intelligible. The pursuit of poetry, therefore, to all those who understand what the pursuit of poetry means, is in time of

suspense or in time of war more closely than ever linked with the spiritual life of man, with all of him that is worth more than six feet of clay.

There has been only a handful of poems written as a direct result of the impact of this war. I heard the other day extracts from Christopher Hassall's unpublished narrative *S.O.S.-Ludlow*. This is the first reaction of a vivid and vigorous mind to the disaster of total war. It is significant that the episode it describes should, in the sum total of horror, be almost trivial. Yet here at least out of the horror has been created something more than a brilliant and tragic description of a tragic event; for the struggle, the defeat and the victory it relates are as old as man. Something too horrible to be endured in fact has become in the hands of a poet a universal challenge. Its note is neither the romantic overstatement of Brooke nor the bitter understatement of Sassoon. It is the voice of a new generation, born during the last Great War, a generation with the courage of acceptance, which is a finer thing than the courage of illusion or despair.

"Here's the warrior purpose for our waking—
That Life, hard pressed and losing ground, and looking back to the ape
To start another evolutionary hare on lines
More humble than the last, threatened with unexpected wreck,
Can ill afford the dowsing of one spark, so it dispute
If only for the radius of an inch, the mindless Night;
For struggle is our element, endurance our tough shield,
And the divinity within our gross and bungling Nature
Our cause and captain . . ."[1]

Man passes, proud or abject. "Ocean, beating for order on the rocks, gives roaring judgment."

The voice of this new generation speaks with no less power and sincerity in Laurence Whistler's new collection of poems born under the shadow and in the impact of this war. *In Time of Suspense* (Heinemann, 5s.) contains a number of lyrics grouped about a narrative poem, the longest if not the most memorable section of the book. Some of these belong clearly to the golden age of the world

[1] Christopher Hassall: *S.O.S.-Ludlow*, pt. iii.

before yesterday; there are a few polished slight occasional verses; but in a dozen of these poems those qualities which have given their author his place among the two or three most interesting poets of to-day have been deepened and enriched in the shadow of a profound spiritual experience. Here once again is that passionate sensitiveness to life as something precious and brief and brittle, that poetic intensity which can, in a single line, send the imagination plunging downward into unfathomable wells. Here too is that peculiarly individual music, that subtle minor key so perfectly attuned to the mood that the thought and the tune of the thought are inseparable.

His music, his power of making words dance to an intricate rhythm or shine in a moving texture of melody, is one of the few infallible tests of a poet's genuineness. Laurence Whistler has, with Beddoes and Collins and Andrew Marvell, something which even Swinburne, with all his mastery of metre lacked—an inexplicable power of creating a music *behind* the metrical pattern. It is not the mere iambic decasyllable that makes such a miracle of Beddoes' lines—

> "So we go
> Placing ourselves among the unconceived
> And the old ghosts, wantonly, smilingly,
> For sleep is fair and warm. . . ."

Nor is it the simple ballad measure to which they are written that enchants two or three of the poems of *In Time of Suspense*. The metrical scheme of *In the Rain* is as old as Chaucer: the poem itself is, with its companion piece *Blood Royal*, written with a Caroline delicacy and precision that make this oft-used instrument yield a newer music. The beauty of the apparently simple quatrain in the *Living Monument* is born of a cunning and unfailing sense of words. There are many experiments, the unrhymed anapaests of the *Dedication*, so perfect a medium for this gravely beautiful sad poem, the hurried iambics of *You Are Listening Now*, the delightful assonances of *A Sleeping Draught*, one of the most purely magical poems in the book:

> "And over the waterfall hardly lit

By the summer darkness, a picture of stars,
And in that wood no sound at all
But the pounding fist of that waterfall,
The silver hand that goes down and down,
The gentle lion in the dark that roars. . . ."

Cleverly used, assonance is more satisfying to a sensitive ear than the most ingenious of rhymes. Mrs. Browning, who it was said would cheerfully rhyme moon with table, bungled with half-rhymes—but what infinite enchantment there is in those assonances of Henry Vaughan :

" My soul, there is a Countrie
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged Centrie
All skilfull in the wars."

The most notable quality of Whistler's new poems is that still, tranced magic, which throws up out of the streamlike melody of the verse sudden unforgettable felicities :

And perfectly the staring snail evolves
Her slow embroidery beneath the moon.

Huge and extraordinary in brass they come,
Their great nasturtiums filling the sad air
With eulogies of glory, while the drum
No more than mutters in the key of fear.

Twilight's gentle page of lies.

Little indeed but silence anywhere :
The cobwebs flashed, where not a breath had crept,
A foxglove flaming steeply into air
Consumed imperial summer while it slept.

By day, the returning terror of swifts, the scream
Of the loop over leaf, the power-dive on to the thatch ;
And the robin whose vivid gift is a tongue of flame
To startle the stone at your foot into lyrical speech.
By night, the approach of the bat, neurotic and odd,
A flicker of bony fingers, here and there ;
And the cool owl swimming in the blinded wood,
A big moth saying nothing in grey air.

These lines are not altogether in the earlier jewelled manner. Something has happened between the *Emperor*

Heart and *In Time of Suspense* to make these felicities more than brilliant concentrations of an imaginative picture. They seem to fall like some potent elixir into the mind, clouding over it and diffusing, drop by drop.

Everywhere there is this sense of stillness : the trancelike ecstasy hovering at the edge of revelation : the quietude that is always at the heart of any magic, black or white. They are beautiful and still and shining, as if engraved on crystal. The landscapes are always at rest : the warm green miles of turf are seen through sunset windows, vivid, remote, inviolable, frozen in an exquisite immobility. " The lambs rejoicing on a hill of jade " are dancing eternally in the colours of a tapestry : the " curled abandon of the waves " is drawn with the precise and painted flourishes at the feet of a Botticelli Venus. June is the stillness of a deserted hall with the " bumble-bee drawing in music A wavering circle of summer " ; winter is less the wind in the black branches than firelight, " angel-bright and slow," in shuttered rooms. Even in the title poem, which is perhaps the most moving and powerful thing in the book, the storm is a cloud which has not broken, which is still brooding in an unbearable hush beyond the dark horizon.

This quality of a luminous stillness freezes the movement in the narrative of *The Quick and the Dead*. This long, carefully-wrought poem renders the story of Elisha and the Shunamite woman in a contemporary parable. Written in the rime royal of *Troilus and Criseyde*, it has something of the same rich leisurely pace. Like the unfolding panorama of a Chinese scroll, verse after verse of profound and sensitive writing gradually unravels this remote and lovely tale. The story is cunningly constructed : yet at the end it lingers as a series of separate pictures distilled one by one in chiselled stanzas, like the coloured bottles of an alchemist. The images are bright and still as pebbles seen through shallow water : the whole poem, indeed, has the vaguely unreal brilliance of sunlit reflections in a mirror :

> She made no sound, the woman sitting there.
> The cat dozed on, contented in the sun.
> The level plates maintained their solemn stare,

> And suddenly the clock to everyone
> Uttered twelve words of silver and was done.
> And when the memories of sound were gone
> The pendulum was moving softly on.

Poetry of this order at its best is Light and Power. At its worst it is stifled by a brocaded stiffness, and becomes elaborate, pretty and ingenious. Certain poems in this book fail of their effect. One feels that *This is the Man* was intended to be what it so nearly is, a powerful and moving revelation of the mind of the poet, but it has been so elaborated with a cloudy music that it falls a little flat. It has a wordiness altogether remote from the simplicity and sincerity of *In Time of Suspense*. The crude, the sudden, the violent, the vulgar—all these are scarcely to be expressed at all by such music; and, outside his own magician's circle, Laurence Whistler is ill at ease. There is an air of triviality about certain of these poems which dwarfs them to the level of the graceful, accomplished little *Graven Images* and which is almost an anti-climax beside such poems as *The Living Monument* and *The Quick and the Dead*.

The peculiar, untroubled loveliness of *The Quick and the Dead* is not characteristic of more than a few of these poems. Over most of them broods the shadow of the imminence of War. The very richness of its unhurried music sharpens the desperate urgency which underlies the title poem. Its serenity of manner is in profound contrast to its mood. It is a thing said quietly and with dignity that is too bitter and brutal to be uttered except by implication. It has the tremendous power of understatement. It is Yestermorrow, the swift merciless unrolling of all life's awareness. Behind all these poems Time's "ruinous wind" breathes into a colossal Nothing: Time is the old enemy who has the takings, the rumour of whose presence builds the unbridgeable wall round all enduring beauty. In *The Living Monument*, a poem too flawless to be broken into by quotation, there is for a moment held in imagination the whole of this unuttered defeat.

These poems were written in time of suspense, and suspense is their keynote. But the mood has changed from

a passionate revolt to a grave acceptance. There are leagues between the attitude of that ominous and uneasy poem *You Are Listening Now*, with its hushed breathless lines and ironic overtones, and the serenity of *It Will Not Last*—

> Sick heart, take comfort then ; for there will be
> All that there was : good days, though not our own.
>
> For what's the difference, if those eyes that watch—
> That hand that threads the needle by the flame—
> Those hands that grope towards the flame and touch—
> Are but the dream of wombs ? They will be rich.
> We were : they will be. It will be the same.

The vexed spirit, " hurled into cockrow with a pounding heart " on the hooves of Nightmare, faces with fine courage the inescapable fact.

For, after all, it is life that matters, not its ending. And life is not existence but awareness—

> "The shopkeeper's mean little scales will not do for a measure of living.
> By them we are paupers. But put the right questions to life : not how much
> Or how safe, but how full in its hour, how vivid ? There we are rich."

It is in the belief that the life of the spirit and the things of the spirit are once again endangered, that a new generation marches without illusions across the trodden battlefields,

> " Gravely, not caring if the flags are flown,
> Believing simply it must save for Earth
> A way of life becoming to mankind,
> A grace of centuries, a thing of worth."

RONALD FULLER

Parliamentary Debate, Official Report, Thursday, June 13th, 1940. *Major Sir Jocelyn Lucas* asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour whether British citizens of military age, such as Mr. W. H. Auden and Mr. Christopher Isherwood, who have gone to the U.S.A. and expressed their determination not to return to this country until war is over, will be summoned back for registration and calling up, in view of the fact that they are seeking refuge abroad ?

Mr. Assheton : I have no information with regard to Mr. Isherwood. Mr. Auden gave an undertaking before leaving the country that he would return if called upon to do so ; he is outside the age-groups so far required to register.

No exit permits would be issued by the Home Office now.

THE WORLD OF TO-MORROW

DESPAIR shall not prevail when we are torn
By tyranny and terror that derides
Our greatest efforts, if our love but guides
Us to an inner source where wit is born.
In vain would the indifferent adorn
Our world with shallow form that only hides
Inanity, insanity,—that rides
On broken hearts to circumstance forlorn.
The world to-morrow rises from the years
Of all our fathers, and of what we are.
Each seed within itself brings forth more seed;
Each thought of Beauty, held through all earth's tears,
Shall count within the world we make or mar
And blossom on the Tree of Life in deed.

HELEN T. DOUGLAS ROBINSON.

SLEEPLESS

WALKING in the garden before to-morrow
Comes gliding ghostlike through the closing door
That separates the darkness from the dawn,
It seems as tho' the world is mine.
All sleeping things belong to sleeping sorrow
From which I have escaped a little while,
Yet must return.
This new world I claim—this solitary world—
Is intimate and beautiful and calm and clear,
I can discern
The tracing of a pattern in the weave.
The little breath of an exhausted breeze—
The sighing of all living things asleep—
Throbs gently as an unborn babe enwombed.
Recedes again and waits alertly deep
In the sheltering crevices of dreams.
And I, who cannot sleep, find courage here
To open life-bewildered eyes and see
An ordered place—a multitude of schemes.

LANGFORD BUDVILLE.

STILL LIFE: TIBETAN MONASTERY

LOW table carved with lotus flowers; low seat
With saffron carpet cushioned; shoes that feet
Have lately warmed; a scroll where black on red
The ancient wisdom of a sage long dead
Enters new incarnation, lives remade
In square and flourished script.
Someone has laid
A rosary of peach stones, furrowed, brown,
To weight the page, as through the doorway down
Across grape-coloured hills a tired wind blows—
A wind outworn with travelling from far snows.
Brushes put briefly by, a line half-writ;
Black china ink that gleams like polished jet,
A water bowl brimmed up to moisten it,
And drops upon the table, shining, wet. . . .
These things are joined in that grave harmony
Of light and shade, texture and tone whereby
Beauty is born, and made aware, man sees
Familiar shapes enfold high mysteries.
In bread all harvests ripen, and a shell
Holds sounding seas; piled fruits of plenty tell;
A country bunch breathes all the fields of spring;
And one limp bird, dull-feathered, head-a-swing,
Is death itself.
So now, beholding these—
Prayers, pen and rosary, carved flower and empty shoe,
I, too, distil their secret essences,
And find a parable of work renewed
Through cloistered days; of quietude,
Remembered wisdom, and the peace that lies
About the Buddha's feet.
All monasteries
Have here their symbol, and who lays aside
The tool he loves to wield need never dread
The leaving of his task. When he is dead
Another hand will write his prayer; re-tied
His sandal shoe another foot, and still
The mystic flower will bloom, the far blue hill
Receive the dawn, and darken under rain,
Whilst priest and sage, born and re-born again
Pursue their path towards their oblivion.

BARBARA BINGLEY

ANCIENT THINGS

"And these are ancient things."—1 Chronicles iv, 22.

WHO can improve the brightness of the sun?
Who can impart to grass a sweeter shade?
Who can enhance the tints that merge as one
Whereof the rainbow coronal is made?
Ah! Who can give the rose a lovelier hue
Or paint the changing sunrise with a brush?
Who can imprint the scintillating dew
Or put on canvas Twilight's gentle hush?
No mortal can a fairer lustre give
To that old story of the Gospel page;
Christ gives the power by which the holy live
And His sweet grace knows not decay or age:
For human ill His Cross is still the cure;
His patience stays with us; His peace is sure.

T. PITTAWAY.

WIDOWER

NOBODY now to complain
Of her old man's unshorn mane
Pull his coat down straighten his tie
Dab a spot of powder on his nose
While he squirms to be off growls
That he'll lose the train or be late for the party.
Nobody now to resent
Being left up there alone
Eating her heart out while he
Gallivants debonair on his own,
And nobody now to relent
Blow a kiss from her bedroom window
Noticing sorrowfully
That he looks very frail and bent.

Nobody there when he lies awake
And hears the drifted rain
Buffeting the window,
Nobody there when he listens for a call
As it used as it used to come

Crying his name
Pleadingly through the bedroom wall,
Nothing at all!
Yet every month brings round
The night that draws her near
When he feels a wistful presence in the room
And maybe out of the gloom
A tiny sound
Tic-tac startles his ear.

"Are you there are you there my dear?"
He murmurs—ah in vain!
Solitude closes down on him
Darkness and silence reign.

CHARLES WHITBY.

TROOPS GOING INTO ACTION

WEARY they flung themselves amid the fragrant grasses
Counting the moments rich to be at ease.
The skylark saw them and the kestrel hovering
Broke into wheeling flight then hung and stared.
Loosely they lay, scattered groups amid the lengthening shadows,
And smoked and talked, flung jests or fell asleep,
Or gazed into the distance quietly reflecting
As they watched the oxen plodding on the hill,
And heard the river trickling among the drowsy willows,
The ripe fruit dropping from the orchard wall.
Many were thinking of their homes and dimly wondered
How the familiar things should seem so dear,
Till it was sunset, and they saw the laden wagons
Filled with the late day's harvest moving home.

When the light eve-wind scattered leaves upon the hillside
They put away their pipes and ceased to talk,
And when the stars came out they rose and dressed in silence
And marched on slow through the crowded night
To where the sky was lit with strange and jabbing flashes
And murmur died in the thudding of the guns;—
Men from England, mostly Somerset and Devon
And Dorset men "who do not shame their kind."

LYND NATHAN.

FOUR POEMS BY T. WESTON RAMSEY:

THE EMPTY WIND

O CHILD, asleep within my arms,
Sweet, silver-throated, heavy-eyed,
From what sad chances, dark alarms
You rest, to know is still denied

My eager searching questioning
Of eyes, of brow, of lips and hair;
I see the curved smile hovering
As though a seraph rested there.

What mystery is in that smile?
Naught but of rest between two spheres
Of darkness set apart awhile,
An hour's forgetfulness of tears?

I cheat the moment with the thought
An hour can spell eternity:
That loveliness which came unsought
Will not have power to turn from me.

But there are powers in the dark Wind:
I looked again and saw how deep,
Still beyond hearing, dumb and blind,
Beyond all waking, was that sleep.

BEETHOVEN AND POET

SHORT stubby fingers,
Massive head,
Over the keyboard crouched—they lean
Along the long dim lighted street
Of black and white, where shadows meet
The rising mist of beauty's pain
And longing; half remembered
Echoes of armies, firm of tread,
The ghost of far applause.

The fingers turn and glide and twist—
O drops of gold, no alchemist
Ever let fall from crucible,
So rounded of sprayed metal! And
The talk goes on, the smoke ascends
While crackling conversation flogs
The whipping-top of wit—descends
The thunder in a dissonance:
"I play no more for such hogs!"

And shall the poet answer then—
"I have no audience; wind and rain
Sting me to music, and again
The golden fire burns through, while men
Have other cares and other zest
Than hearing words that laugh and weep
—O fire die down and let me rest,
I sing no more for such sheep!"

Vain words—his purposes are dust
And leaves before the wind: he must
Sing, though there be no man to heed,
For he is ear and wind and reed.

ENDYMION TO SILVER

SILVER, be still silver,
Silver, be not gold;
Gold is so red-veined with fire—
Silver, smooth and cold,
Silently poured forth from
The pearl-white crucible
Ringed with keen spear-points round,
Unstained and terrible
Furnaces of the moon
With no fire burning—
Yet white-hot iron

In the sun churning
Has not thy glamour,
Immaculate metal,
Nor the sharp thorn
Of thy most fragile petal.

Hair hast thou, hoar frost,
Breasts of round snow,
And repose deeper than
Red metals know.
Thy keen cold purity
Frames whiter passions
Than the bright filigree
Beaten gold fashions.
Silver, thou art my love,
I will stay with thee,
I will bathe my burning brain
In thy purity.
Whether it be crystal,
Or of tears the sea,
Where is there cool water,
Silver, like to thee?

CES ESPACES INFINIS . . .

THEY tell us of unfathomable deeps
That lie uncharted between us and you,
Sounded by light's long plummet-line that keeps
A rigid path threading the darkness through;
Spaces so far the instantaneous light
Sickens and flags with weariness upon
The long monotonous road, and to our sight
Reports a star perhaps already gone—
Vanished maybe when Chosroes was King
Extinct when Gascony was swept with snow,
Its lazy messenger still following
The track laid down so many years ago.
And yet with what compassion you look down
From those far depths on countryside and town!

T. W. Ramsey.

DIMINUENDO

ON summer eves that are so long a-dying,
They linger on the terrace, yearning, sighing
For night, for darkness, for oblivion.
How sad it is to sit and watch the sun
Drooping and sinking like a brilliant flower
That, loth to perish suddenly and wholly,
Lets fall its fiery petals one by one!
How dull it is to wait, and hour by hour,
See all day's splendours fading very slowly,
To feel the garden growing ever chiller,
Dimmer and greyer, quieter and stiller,
Till there is scarce a glimmer, stir or breath. . . .
On summer eves that are so long a-dying,
They linger in the twilight, yearning, sighing
For sleep, that is the next-best thing to death.

E. F. A. GEACH.

THE HUNTER

IF not a sparrow fall
Without His knowing,
Will He not hear your call
Through the horn blowing?

Did He not feel your heart
Beat fast this morning,
Because the hunt would start
At the scent's warning?

Does He not see your face
Glow at the baying
Of hounds that leap apace
To the red slaying?

Will He not heed your cheer
Through a beast's crying
That brings an echo near
Of His Son's dying?,

IËRNE ORMSBY.

THE MIND OF THE POETS

I

"POETRY," wrote Shelley, "is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." Ought we not then to try to understand the mind of the poets, to probe into the means by which they attain these moments of exceeding glory; in the hope that this will help us in our own conquest of happiness, and some of us also in the production of better creative work? This seems to me so important a matter that it is surprising not to be able to discover a single book which has been written on the subject.

It is true that Freud said: "the æsthetic estimation of a work of art, as well as the explanation of artistic endowment, are not to be considered as tasks for psychoanalysis." But I imagine, and I hope, that when he wrote these words he was thinking of psychoanalysis in its clinical sense, and not of a sympathetic inspection of the characteristics of genius.

Shelley's words are of the happiness of poets, but we all know how much despair there is for them too. It is a truism to state that great artists are preponderantly of that temperament which swings from the brilliant heights of elation to the depths of depression. Yet there is something appalling in finding that a man who gave as much happiness to the world as Schubert could write: "I feel myself the most unhappy, the most miserable man on earth; a man whose most brilliant hopes have come to nothing; whose enthusiasm for the beautiful threatens to vanish altogether." Of the despair of poets I think no special illustration is necessary; yet I cannot refrain from quoting, for their own sake, three of the most ingenuous lines which Keats ever wrote:

> "You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell
> To some Kamschatkan Missionary Church
> Than with these horrid moods be left i' the lurch."

Of this tragedy of genius I think we shall understand a little more if we realize that it is usually a condition of temperament which derives from early youth—long before the heights of poetry were attained. Consider the con-

fession of W. B. Yeats: "I remember little of childhood but its pain. . . . I have grown happier with every year of life, as though gradually conquering something in myself." Beside this might be placed Gibbon's statement: "I am tempted to enter a protest against the trite and lavish praise of the happiness of our boyish years, which is echoed with so much affectation in the world. That happiness I have never known, that time I have never regretted. . . ."

May we seek the clue to one source of the unhappiness of genius in a remark of Hazlitt's: "The man of genius spends his whole life in telling the world what he had known himself when he was eighteen"? It is this sense, perhaps, that all is already over with him, that the rest of humanity are but babes compared to his stature, and that he is a schoolmaster of idiots, that has done so much to give the poets that periodical sense of blank futility.

II

There are, of course, other more general causes of their unhappiness. There is that "divine discontent" which in itself is one of the sources of poetry, and which shows itself as unrestingly in the struggle with social injustice; which drove Shelley to labour in Dublin for the good of the Irish, and Byron to die at Missolonghi for Greece. And again there is that tormenting indecision which the world perpetually presents to sensitive minds between good and better causes, of which Renan wrote: "Les natures profondément bonnes sont toujours indécises." This last, far from being an ally of poetry, is an enemy of it, as Keats clearly realized when he wrote: "It struck me what quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously —I mean *negative capability*. That is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after facts and reason."

Homer and Shakespeare may have been jovial fellows; they have been imagined so; but little is known of their lives. Of the poets of whom we do know, many have been self-tortured, have been ready to cry out with Keats: "O

for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!" Most, probably, would also agree with the predilection of Hume when he wrote of " . . . an agreeable melancholy, which of all dispositions in the mind is the best united to love and friendship."

How shall we classify the sources of the inspiration to write poetry? In these are mingled idealism and ambition, the uncontrollable bursting of rhythm and the explosion of personality. Surely this is too hard a knot for us to unravel at present. How little, again, is known of the effect of physical conditions upon poets. Amongst English poets who were affected by tuberculosis may be included Keats, Shelley, Stevenson, Flecker and D. H. Lawrence. Other men with the poet's make-up have been epileptics: Mahomet and Dostoievsky are examples. Some poets, from Lucretius to John Clare, have been labelled by the text-books as mad; and others have had the imputation of it. In our own times, what are we to make of A. E. Housman's remark: " My poetry, so far as I could make out, sprang chiefly from physical conditions, such as a relaxed sore throat during my most prolific period"?

How much more we should know if we could understand why Arthur Rimbaud ran away from his poetic youth to Abyssinia, or why the inspirations of great poetry came to Cowper in his old age. To some of these things psychology may one day find an answer, but the present generation is not likely to know it.

But there is one way in which some poets have regarded themselves which is not usually expected of them by the public, and that is as scientists. It was Dryden who wrote: " A man should be learned in several sciences, and should have a reasonable, philosophical, and in some measure a mathematical head, to be a complete and excellent poet." Certainly a poet who works and reworks over the lines of a lyric is an experimentalist, striving as deftly for exactitude as a chemist weighing his re-agents. A great sonnet upon a sunset contains truth as exact about that sunset as the meteorologist's description of it; that is, truth in the sense that the poet is describing exactly and

with superb definition the effect of that vast combination of colours on the human emotions. It is in this sense that a simile or a metaphor can be as scientifically accurate as Boyle's Law or Avogadro's Hypothesis. To speak of a face " . . . that launched a thousand ships " is as true as to recount its features one by one. There are in this world many sorts of truth—scientific truth, the revealed truth of religion, and poetic truth are three of them; and the last of these cannot lightly be ignored by the hardiest philistine.

III

Into the technique of poets' composition it is not possible to enter in a small space; but there is perhaps one principle so fundamental to the poet and so little understood by the public, that it is worth enlarging on. If a poet stands upon a height overlooking a lovely view, he does not—he could not—write a poem on it then and there. The time of receiving emotional impulses is not the time of setting them out. That must come after a period of deferred cerebration, when the image of the view will flash back from the sub-conscious months or years later (a few weeks or months is probably usual with poets), as the groundwork for a simile, or the subject of a whole poem; or it may never recur at all.

This principle is probably fundamental to any art. An interesting parallel may be cited in the method said to have been used by Beethoven, who in the summer used to record in a notebook the ideas that came to him in his long country walks, and in the winter would work these into compositions at home in Vienna. A careful study of the way in which recorded impressions re-arrange themselves in a poet's mind has been made in that admirable book, *The Road to Xanadu*.

The principle itself is known by poets, and the wisest of them have, I think, trained themselves to the sensitive receipt of impressions as much as to the setting out of these on paper. Their smaller imitators might well learn to do so; and this is perhaps one of the clues to greater happiness which we are seeking.

Individual poets have told us little of their methods of

composition. A. E. Housman, indeed, has described how after taking a carefully regulated amount of beer with his lunch, he would work out his poems on walks through the fields. Others who write poetry have found that ideas come to them when their minds are partially occupied with a setting that does not make too much demand upon them, as during the familiar ritual of a church service, or while watching an unexciting film. The impulse to poetry is sometimes produced by listening to music or by the speed of a fast car. Here, I think, is another clue worth taking up; how the mind may be freed and benefited by the partial occupation of some of its less important channels (and shall we say also by the sedative effect of beer?); and how rhythm of music or fast movement may attune the mind to a rhythm of composition.

IV

We began by considering the unhappiness of poets, but this is not the whole picture. To Shelley, indeed, it was the happiness which appeared more remarkable; and it is probable that all great poets at their best have "... felt a high certainty of being blest." This serenity, this confidence, is perhaps most noticeable in the intense conviction of many poets that their works will live to posterity. This conviction is seen in such poems as Horace's *Exegi monumentum aere perennius*, Shakespeare's *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*, and Flecker's *To a Poet a Thousand Years Hence*.

The greatest poets, like devotees, lose also in their work all sense of the importance of self. To them it has perhaps ceased to be important to express their personality, their whole effort being towards a mirroring of the truth that they see around them. So, at any rate, I interpret Keats' statement: "Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral intellect—they have not any individuality, any determined Character."

If we look for the secret of this happiness in the midst of unhappiness, it is, I think, to be found in some words of Goethe: "It is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin." Surely it is because they

have faced unhappiness for the sake of their own souls, and to the benefit of humanity, that the poets have discovered happiness. Having the most sensitive minds to be found among men, they have yet brought themselves, not to avoid but to probe into the tragedy of life and extract from it something for the comfort of souls less perceptive than their own. They themselves must suffer in the process, that is their renunciation.

In religious mysticism the stages of approach to the Godhead have been repeatedly defined as threefold. The first is described variously by different writers as purgation or purification, and has, I think, the same sense as the phrase translated above as "renunciation." The second stage is that of illumination, the third of union. Mysticism is still a subject of doubtful respectability; its protagonists have never quite been able to convince the world how far their visions are of real significance to the human race. But the first stage is surely one that, from the experience of genius, we can all believe in as leading to a fuller life. The great poets are men who stand upon that first step of the ascent to heaven, and their message is, I believe, that we should follow them there.

Mbale, Uganda. GEOFFREY MASEFIELD.

UNDISMAYED

EVER the same renewal, welcome, hope;
Young couples build or lease the chosen houses
Others by death forsake. Each babe arouses
All the old longings left upon the slope,
Gradual landslide ending in mid air.
Up the same hill, vital and proud of limb,
Men scramble scanning life-peaks, purple, dim,
Bright mist enveloped; passing unaware
Meridian's hour, groping mistily
For contact, cloudy rumour of new races
Reaching their goal with thin triumphant faces,
Armed with new creeds, old hope, the babe To Be . . .
Dream phantoms on the hills, they pass and fade,
Fall weeping, laughing, curious, undismayed.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

THREE POEMS BY ALAN ROOK:

OVERTURE TO TIME

NO lamentation. How easily he closes.
A merciful god grants no awakening here.
Question and silence are his metamorphosis
into a thousand such. Our hidden fear

is not for him who's past the hemlock's weaving,
nor senses sorrow's rue upon his eyes.
His rose is fallen. He's vanished. *We* are grieving
over earth's old aching miseries.

No comfort? Yes. There is a figure transcending
day, in her augural eyes the marble of power,
and life, a cur at heel, her thoughts attending.

Only our follies can move her; yet she'll raze
our agony. Death is her overture.
Even fat faded Memory obeys.

FRUITS OF THE EARTH

SUNDAY: in Oxford the cathedral bells
measure the hours of spring. Men praise
now at this hour the mystery,
the hidden One.

Slowly from Merton down the tree-roofed ways
and down the secret river fly
these bells, on breezes slowly,
steadily blown.

The Sunday-concealed faces gone; the High
surrendered to shorts and guide-books; smiling
the organ plays discreetly.
Who shall atone

at once this sin of praise, release these sinning?—
whilst the debt mounts, and Europe lies
bare to the breast, the lowly
still undertone

of guns encircles the cities. Suffering cries
to suffering, and Hesperus
is secretive, whilst lonely
children run

winged in the waiting streets : each shuttered house
self-conscious hides its treasure. No
garlands of rosemary
or cinnamon

trick out the dying. So these years shall grow
ripening from hour to hour, shall frost
the glass of knowledge, surely
shall enthrone

not discreetly these worshippers, this worshipped, tosst
forever outwards, nor light these hearts
forever where the daily
death shall come.

Whilst ah, from the incontestable memory starts
forever the mind, and life has shone
through sorrow's territory,
in heart alone.

WAR GENERATION

WE have hardly started to suck the core of the apple,
our gobbet of life is stranger still to the tongue ;
we have scarcely yet forsaken the drying nipple
for a man's place in the sun.

Only last week we laughed at the glimpse of a rainbow,
our toys of Monday are scarcely back on their tray :
we had never even learnt to *see* a Picasso,
never, till yesterday.

Only this morning the telescope eye of the housefly
was ours to measure the constant path of the sun.
This morning the power and the madness to be, to *be* ;
yet to-night it is done.

For to-night we, old in our own generation,
have learnt the wisdom of segregating our days,
living each hour on the crumbs of a bargain broken
ignoring the haemorrhage.

But we cannot keep cheating forever, we cannot pass
forever the subtle sting of the codicil;
the vision devolves on others, so fetch the glass
that *our* spring must fill.

ALAN ROOK.

THE BALLAD OF YOUNG MICHAEL

YOUNG Michael drives the heifers in to Tipperary Fair,
But why would he be doin' that? For none has money there!
And Aherlow has boggy roads, and hills are hard to cross,
And drivin' them all home again is just a grief and loss.

Our house is far and lonely, on the sloping of a hill,
The Galtees tower above its thatch,—the mountain air is chill;
There's naught to see outside it but miles of field and rock,
And naught to hear *inside* it but the ticking of the clock!

So Michael drove the heifers out, and over Slieve-na-muck,
But oh! the Saints were good that day, and hadn't he the luck!
He sold the lot!—And tho' his boots had holes, and held the wet,
He took the money up the street, and bought a *Wireless Set!*

Then he slipped into the Chapel, to make the matter square
About the bills all left unpaid, and lit a candle there,
And to the topmost Perch of Heaven he hopped as light as air,
(Michael! O, Michael! A clever lad you were!)

So back he stepped to Aherlow, all joyful with his load,
You'd think the King of Ireland was progressin' up the road;
And bits of poles and wires he put, behind our garden-plot,
And now we have *a Wireless!* (Let the bills be paid, or not!)

Our house is full of music now, of Weddin's, Talks, and Bands,
As good as if you'd packed your bag, and gone to foreign lands,
We sit together, turning knobs, with Rover near us curled,
All listenin',—yes, *and lookin'—through the Windows of the World!*

MARGARET E. STRINGER.

EURIPIDES WAS A POET

BUILDINGS fall, and paintings fade,
Light itself is lost in shade,
Lilies rise and bloom and die,
A myriad Troys in ashes lie,
The blue skies dim and grey again,
And nothing lovely can remain ;
And nothing can abate the wrong,
Except the Word that tells the song—
This, alone, immortal is,
Defiant of the centuries,
Older than the earth or sea,
Essence of Eternity.

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

MAY 1940

THIS is a God-given May, a spring of springs—
the Voice of Love has called to life the trees, the flowers, the songs of birds,
this, man's ugliest, is God's loveliest spring.

Day after day the hawthorn foams in sunlight, chestnuts light the woods
and buttercups gold-splash the vivid fields, each flower a glistening cup of love—
(what artist can paint the buttercups mirror-sheen,
what craftsman fashion the lily-of-the-valley bells,
what sculptor mould the subtle simplicity of the tulip-cup ?)

And man in his ignorant pride is insanely destroying himself with his vaunted knowledge,
pitting his poor will against the mighty Creator.

The angels who have painted the buttercups are watching ;
their silent voices echo in the lily-bells,
they lift the tulip-cups for those who will to drink,
watching and waiting for the creators, their kindred, to draw near.
Only a few draw near ; only a few hear the silent voices, drink wisdom from the tulip-cups,
waiting and watching, like the angels, for the day when love shall light the world as May the chestnut-flowers.

DALLAS KENMARE.

WRUNG LIGHT

LOVELIEST light and worthy our seeking
Where is the joy of your swift-winging now?
Strike down, o energy giver,
On the old growing of meadow and mountain
Man (to the thrilling of), heart (to the breaking)
Strike, o loveliest light, gold-winging!

Crushed by, and light beaten by, yet
Longing, we live under and in gold.
Sea, hills—in shocklight are paddled
And what tells the grass, splashing in run-gold?

And do you remember
That day of red-gold going?
Crept light on the inner wall
And fled, leaked purple on the thrown
Clouds, then over the down sky slipped.

O why, why—to us undeserving
Is joy given and beauty?—
We would give greater joy back, back—
But unable are we to render
In felt degree our findings.

Oh wrung souls with pain-joy—
Drink light deeply and although
Incompletely, tell your found beauty—
Oh how deep surging is worth the singing!

MARGERY SMITH.

MOONBEAM GLOW

MOONBEAM glow,
Silvery light.
Shining so,
Through the dark night.
Yellow sun,
A golden gleam.
Day has begun,
I had a dream. MAIRI STEWART.

FORFEIT

I HAVE known
Beauty,
in a fern-frond,
in a sea-passion,
in a look from dying eyes;
and I have known
the shade from Beauty's shadow,
in a poignant fear,
in a lost smile,
in the pain in living eyes:
and because to me the shade was real,
I had no further claim to substance.

Vancouver. IRENE H. MOODY.

TO ANN

YOU who danced lightly, in whose heart was singing,
You who went gaily in your silken dress
And were soon tired of all, a welcome flinging
To death which robs men of their happiness;

You lay and smiled, nor heard the noisy weeping
Of rain that sorrowed for a joy that fled;
You do not stir, so deeply are you sleeping,
Now small birds sing of love above your bed;

But your thought makes in me, now spring's begun,
Fluttering with the birds' soft-feathered wings:
"Though wrapped in dust my heart, though life be done,
Springtime and love are dear remembered things."

MORWYTH REES.

I cannot tell you how much the POETRY REVIEW means to me, and feel quite sure that the joys of poetry can never be expressed in terms of "hard cash." May I take this opportunity of expressing the great pleasure which we all felt at Aldworth? The whole time was most enjoyable, and as a Tennyson lover, I did so appreciate the wonderful time we spent in the poet's home. D. MCMURRAY (Edgware).

I think your work is a particularly valuable contribution to spiritual requirements in the horrors of war.—ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXXV

Turning to THE POETRY REVIEW of September-October, 1931, we find a glowing estimate on Dorothy Randolph Byard's work. *Selfward Journey* (Falmouth Press, Portland, Maine) is her first book since that time. It is interesting to know she is a "painter by trade, but certain thoughts, and certain word combinations and phrases present themselves to me so alluringly and so insistently for expression by writing rather than by painting, that I simply must externalize them through that channel, other than through my more usual one."

Miss Byard is also known as a lecturer on the graphic arts and as a prose writer and is often heard on national radio stations. Here is contemporary poetry at its best: "Frozen Flame"—

This absence drains my heart; no thing can fill
Such emptiness; my two eyes, lacking you,
See nothing and my tongue is loth to spill
One syllable, that lately minted new
And golden words. No scabbard mourns the blade
That shone within its darkness more than I
That all-compacted closeness which allayed
Our pain of being two. Not earth and sky
Mingle at the horizon-line more blended.
Racked brain, torn body, every aching sense
Remembering and waiting to be mended
By you alone—such void grows so intense
With desolation that I do not know
If flesh be frozen flame or burning snow.

The forty-three pages of this book are filled to overflowing with appreciation of beauty and the power to tell of it.

Among *Poems* by Mary Pauline Wright (Allentour House, Lowell, Mass.) are several that lift the writing of this poet from the ordinary level. Here is a sonnet: *Alea Jacta Est*—

When the time comes to set above my dust
Some small, insistent marble, with its thrust
Against forgetting . . . no word let it bear,
Nor any legend. I shall not be there
To watch the shredding satin, or to feel
Life in the womb of earth. Let it reveal
No syllable that graced a lover's plea,
Or lay in pain on screeds of agony
Or ran along the lip of facile fame
To swift oblivion. This poor, stupid name
Has none of me to write along a stone
For men to think on. Plant for me, alone,
Some rebel rose that knows no garden school . . .
To mark me for a woman . . . and a fool.

Miss Wright sends us the following statement:

"The more I read and love poetry, the more of it I try to write, the more deeply do I realize that poetry, just as poetry, is difficult to write about. Phases, types and classes of poetic work, yes, those could be written about, probably . . . but of the word that wells out of the heart straight from an emotion that breaks a mold, or seeks a lovely form, holds a moment 'forever young' or captures a dark despair in its own amber . . . of these, what could be written? And, to me, only that stark and utter and unstudied expression is poetry."

Juliet Alves came from out Kentucky, and *Seven Oaks* (Loker Raley, New York, N.Y.) teems with the beauty of Kentucky and the spirit. This is Miss Alves' first book. She writes me the following of her reaction to the writing of poetry:

"To me the writing of poetry is necessary to the outlet of emotion. To this end *Eloquent Surcease* in my book is directed."

The poem follows:

This is no new loneliness of the sky,
This want of colour, this want of stirring clouds;
Ever has it known these moments unprofound,
This pale agate blue that rides in solitude, high
Against the day, sweeps evenly and evenly shrouds
The scope of vision, pale blue to lowly ground.

Yet this is no tranquillity of strengthful peace—
This pause in feeling; rather it is pain
To hold unuttered, eloquent surcease,
When passions gather into clouds, till rain,
Collected, over-weighted, spills its power
Into a great and fervour-lashing hour!

A seasonal poem is "Stricken Spring"—

You went from me along the pathless way,
In the white mist of birches before they leaf,
And shadows parted every limb to lay
Their silences on my unuttered grief;
A stillness fell that was no part of spring;
Among the trees there came no sound of bird,
No breaking earth to bear a tiny thing . . .
And yet—was that a breath of pain I heard?

Paul Phellis Dull, author of *Sprouts From a Small Potato* (Henry Harrison, New York), sends us a paragraph on poetry:

"Poetry: a word that excites many different reactions. In the minds of some people there is a special stigma attached to the word: slovenliness, eccentricity, tedium. In the minds of others —and one likes to think this represents the majority of thinkers —the word stands for something that makes living a little more

bearable, more stimulating, more purposeful. And it is my earnest hope that my first published efforts—in perhaps a fumbling manner—might do a little bit of that."

Mr. Dull is by profession a lawyer and most of the poems in this book are short and frank and entertaining.

The Rochester Poetry Society is justly proud of the fact that their first president was Carl Carmer. "We can claim a Pulitzer Prize winner, Dr. Robert P. Tristram Coffin, among our honorary members." *The Gleam* (Anthology of original verse by members of the Rochester Poetry Society) represents one year's output.

In it Robert P. Tristram Coffin describes "Young Spring"—

Where the hot rocks tumbled high,
I came on a piece of fallen sky,

Filaments of moonstone froth,
Translucent, strange, and lovely cloth.

It looked as if the west wind's breath
Would shatter it and be its death. . . .

We find a number of good sonnets in this collection.

No Final Breath, by Grace Buchanan Sherwood (The Wings Press, New York), is a fifth collection by this poet. Readers and critics comment upon the unfailing regard for the technical requirements of good poetry to be found in her writings. She says "How I wish something could be done to convince the average person that poetry is not a thing to be reverenced but carefully avoided."

There are a number of sonnet sequences in the volume and we quote the following lyric: "Even A Beggar Must Be Glad."—

Even a beggar must be glad,
Breathing this aromatic air;
Dun coloured rags that once were sad
Must sing aloud the sun they wear.

I think there is no sable shawl
That will not flutter out and blow
On this sweet breeze; where sunbeams fall
Grief ebbs and tears forget to flow.

Let every man who sees this light,
Who breathes this crisply fruited air,
Now render thanks for pure delight,
Bestowed for all alike to share.

Mrs. Winthrop Bushnell Palmer, author of *Flight Without Fear* (The Overbrook Press, Stamford, Conn.), sends us the following: "I write poetry because I love life and people. It is not possible to tell the truth

about life and people except in song. The truth is a shy thing and frightened of prose which deals in reasons which are usually the contradiction of the truth—for the sake of public welfare. I respect public welfare but I am in love with the truth—and so I write poetry."

Sister Miriam, author of *Woven of the Sky* (Macmillan and Co., New York), writes :

" I think so many things about poetry that I do not know where or how to start telling you of them. If I wrote you a month from now, I'd probably have different or new ideas on the subject." She continues with a quotation from Mr. T. S. Eliot : " We should distinguish between the work of authors which is the product of a special religious awareness, and that which, with this, includes a general awareness," and adds " Though my own verse is said by critics to have come from ' a deep mood of mysticism,' it is really the outcome of life, not purely religious life except insofar as both, in a nun's life, are one and the same."

Sister Miriam queries : " Is poetry entirely dependent on images ? Is there no other justifiable poetry ? "

In her title-poem she says :

This tent that is the thought of You is wide
And high as heaven is high, yet fearlessly
I wander up and down, alone, inside
This canvas woven of the sky for me.

When I emerge into the alien air
With quiet hands and still more quiet eyes,
The chariot of the stars is waiting there
To bear me on, by love made strong and wise :
So strong that now at last I can be brave ;
So wise, all briefer loves must find a grave.

Pearl Hogrefe is the associate professor of English at Iowa State College and is in charge of creative writing. She is a mid-westerner by birth, training and experience. The colour and tang of western life is reflected in her poems and her wide travels and broad education make her reflections engaging. Miss Hogrefe says of poetry :

" Why do I write poetry ? Because I enjoy creative work, whether it is tangible or intangible—whether it is gardening or making a poem. Because the shaping of a mood or a thought in a finished poem is growth and renewal."

Excelling in her use of the sonnet form in *Renewal* (Prairie Press), Miss Hogrefe is equally acceptable in the free line, as illustrated in these two following : " Year's End "—

Unmarred by restless, human feet,
Unstained by a fleck of blackness,

The snow is falling over a lifeless, frozen earth—
From the cold, barren shoulders of the Rockies
To the hard, unstirring Mississippi—
Falling lightly.
Tiny twigs, unbent, receive the gentle, steady flakes.

A mild, grey sky is close to the sleeping earth.
Christmas lights are blurs of red and green,
Like placid eyes in the misty grey,
But the stirring and shouting of Christmas are over.
In the snowy world, nothing moves but a cat,
Picking with care its hasty way.

Slowly the fragile silence covers me close,
Softly it folds me in garments of rest.
The bubble of silence is floating—floating—
It does not break.

"Departure" is striking:

So this is illness, death:
Only a calm remoteness, no struggle, little pain—
Waking to see without surprise a strange, cold April snow,
To meet the pressure of anxious hands and make a feeble smile,
To hear the rhythm of friendly voices
Only as giant cliffs meet struggling spray—
And turn again to sleep.

To slip away at last
As waters gather in a cup-shaped valley, closed by rocky hills;
As maple leaves, a blue and breathless autumn day,
Will circle quietly down to earth.

Tapers to the Sun, Alberta McMahon Sherwin's first book (The Wings Press), gives evidence of a mind sensitive to what meets the eye and charms the ear. Imaginative, colourful songs I would call them, as in "Flight O' Fancy":

My feet shall be shod with the wild typhoon,
My shoulders be tipped with wings of white,
I will borrow a beam from the rising moon,
And fly away through the velvet night.

My love will see in the sky afar,
A streak of light like a golden thread,
She will think it the path of a falling star,
But I shall be flying to her instead.

I will drop to her feet and catch her up,
And fold her close in a cloudy frieze;

We will fly away till we stop to sup
On the distant isles of Hesperides.

In the quatrain that follows, we find an Amen from many of us: "Survival"—

Thousands must die to make one general great,
A thousand trees a cask of pure quinine,
A thousand roses for a perfumed drop,
Ten thousand poems for one immortal line,

Mrs. Sherwin writes us:

"I have written poetry as a method of self expression, as one is impelled to sing, because I am happy when writing. I consider a poem a work of art, even as music or painting, whereby I may capture an emotion which thus becomes a part of my life, and a joy to others who are not gifted with the ability of putting their own feelings into words. I believe that the poems I loved and committed to memory when a child influenced me to write poetry myself."

Jessie Miller Robinson's first book of lyrics *Queen Anne's Lace* (Wings Press, New York) brings us the expression of a poetic and sensitive writer. Until recently a resident of Salt Lake City, Mrs. Robinson is now living in Southern California. She says,

"I find verse writing my happiest way of self-expression. Poetry is an art that awakens the soul to beauty, bringing solace and peace to many in this terror-stricken world. The appreciation of poetry is needed more than ever before. Even light or simple verse which lingers in the memory when prose is forgotten can cheer and comfort us, and is therefore worth the writing and the reading."

The fragile and charming lyric which titles this book follows:

O fragile flower of snow,
What miracle of grace
Fingered the living loom
That spun such fairy lace?

Who set the motif there
For eager eye to see?
Who wove this frail delight
For butterfly and bee?

Only that Weaver's hand
Where countless marvels are
Could shape an earthly weed
As lovely as a star!

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

PEACE IN THE MIDST OF WAR

ABOUT twenty years ago, when noticing a comprehensive collection of English poetry that has since been reprinted several times, we pointed out that it was made up almost entirely of poems included in three existing standard anthologies. Mr. Philip Wayne in *The Heritage of Poetry* (Longmans, 7s. 6d.) has been more independent and courageous. Although ranging from Chaucer to the present day in above 500 packed pages, he claims that " considerably more than half of the poems here printed appear neither in the Golden Treasury nor in the Oxford Book of English Verse," the result being actually a fresh survey of a vast domain, made by an anthologist who is artist as well as historian who has chosen the poems " neither for celebrity nor subject but, to the best of my ear and understanding, for the co-existence manifest in them of vitality and poise." With this high aim in mind the contents of the volume should be examined by the earnest reader. Mr. Wayne claims that " each choice has been made separately in reference to the great and constant demand we make upon the poet, namely that the energy of his perception shall wonderfully clarify his object, before bringing it into the passionate continence of rhythm. A great poem is made when perception is purged in the very fire of imagination that fuses it into form." It is fascinating to see what contemporary poems, in Mr. Wayne's opinion, measure up to this test, nothing by Laurence Whistler, Ruth Pitter, Stephen Spender, Michael Roberts, W. W. Gibson, Alfred Noyes, William Watson, but " Poem for an Anniversary," by Cecil Day Lewis, " The Road to Arles," by Roy Campbell, " A Song for Simeon," by T. S. Eliot, " Look, Stranger," by W. H. Auden, " Honey Harvest," by Martin Armstrong, " Epitaph," by L. Abercrombie, " Late Snow," by J. C. Squire, and actually four pieces by Edmund Blunden, five by Walter de la Mare and three by W. H. Davies. Kipling's " Way through the Woods " and Frances Thompson's " In No Strange Land," G. K. Chesterton's " The Convert," and a sonnet each by John Masefield and John Drinkwater satisfy the editor, together with four poems each by Edward Thomas and W. B. Yeats. It is no disparagement to say that the individual reader will find it debatable whether all these poems meet Mr. Wayne's larger question. " How did human feeling so work within this man that his technique was inspired to this rare perfection, leaving an immortal embodiment of vital experience for us all ? " but it is worth while applying this test. When in solitude " you bend your head and wipe away a tear " . . . " late-coming home, to bread and butter tea " and other similar lines come nearer to bathos, certain stanzas from " The Vision of Judgment " may not be the one imperishable nucleus of Byron, nor " In a drear-nighted December " immortal Keats, yet Mr. Wayne's anthology is more illuminating and valuable than several other comprehensive, permanent anthologies, and his pointed individual notes amplify the unity of a well-edited, handsomely produced volume.

Messrs. Longmans have published also a school edition (5s.) of

this *Heritage of Poetry*, with a new preface, offering it as a compact new selection for fifth and sixth forms, with the admirable purpose of assisting them to "learn to notice changing values and thus form standards such as may temper their judgment and their mode of life and lead them to further discrimination and capacity for vital sympathies. . . . If the finest things of the English spirit are not sympathetically presented at school, then their impress and even their acquaintance will pass from the lives of most English people—an educational betrayal of the worst kind."

"The Oxford Book of Christian Verse" also should be examined in the light of the Introduction, in which Lord David Cecil succinctly traces the development of religious verse in this country, starting with the declaration that in Christian Europe religious emotion has not proved the most fertile soil for poetry, "Rarely does humanity produce a Blake gifted with the power to forge new and living symbols for the cosmic mysteries of spiritual experience." Yet in spite of many deterrents, "England has produced a number of magnificent devotional poets, and others not specifically pious who have yet found in scripture stimulating subjects for their gifts as didactic or narrative writers." If an apology for this present collection were needed it would be found in the claim that it presents both a history of Christianity in England and an exhibition of the varieties of the religious temperament. It divides itself, the Editor recognizes, into four phases. "The first, the pre-Reformation stage, is the least important. For it contains no poet of the first distinction." The next period, in religious verse as elsewhere, is the great age. "Its first phase, that of the early renaissance, is predominately grand, sumptuous, pictorial and impersonal. Spenser, the creator of this characteristic manner, did not himself apply it to Christian subjects on any considerable scale. But in brief passages, such as the unfinished cantos on mutability which close *The Faerie Queen*, he showed this was not from incapacity. A power of clear-cut ideal visualization harmonizes with a rolling organ music to create a majestic sublimity. The possibilities implicit in such a passage were explored more fully by Spenser's successors, Giles Fletcher and Drummond of Hawthornden."

"It was with the seventeenth century, however, with the growth of high Anglicanism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other, that religious poetry rose to its greatest height. The leading figure of the period was Donne," who "takes first place among English Christian poets, for he alone is equally interesting as Christian and as poet. . . . The Caroline School of devotional poets are his direct descendants. And though none of them was of the calibre to equal him at his best, four among them, Crashaw, Traherne, Vaughan and Herbert, each made a unique contribution to our religious literature." Herbert, "though less sensationally impressive than Crashaw or Vaughan at their best, in certain qualities was their superior: in pathos, in variety

of fancy, in sense of form. But it is his religious quality that gives him his pre-eminence. Here he can be compared to Donne himself, and not altogether to Donne's advantage. Herbert's religious vision is narrower but of a purer quality. . . . Yet Herbert was not inhumanly spiritual. . . . But the very beauty of his character prevented his spiritual struggle from achieving the tension of Donne's. He felt himself exiled from heaven rather than in hell. . . . Herbert has an additional interest as the most complete exponent in our poetry of the peculiar genius of the English Church. His piety is an eminently Anglican piety: refined, dignified, with a delicate appreciation of the value of style and ceremony, but subdued and restrained; its pure outline and quiet tints a strong contrast to the rich colours and perfumed incense-flames of Crashaw. Round these four cluster a number of lesser names, notably Quarles, and in his rare devotional vein Marvell." This period is closed by Milton, who "was not essentially a religious poet. He was a philosopher rather than a devotee. . . . But if he is not our greatest religious poet, he is the greatest of English poets who have made religion their subject. . . . For mastery of design, for distinction of style, for sustained grandeur of conception, Milton surpasses every other poet whose works are quoted in this collection."

A lesser period follows. "Dryden, who presides over its opening is our only great master of versified theology." Subsequently "arose a school of hymn writers: Addison, Isaac Watts (with a "gift of song which raised his best hymns to the level of the true lyric"), the passionate evangelical Toplady, Charles Wesley and John Newton, and the agonized Cowper." "Keble and Newman continue the eighteenth-century tradition of pious writing, earnest and direct in tone, classical and conventionalized in diction. . . ." But *The Christian Year* "is feeble stuff, a sentimental concoction in ecclesiastical Victorian mock-Gothic."

The second half of the nineteenth century "is the second outstanding epoch of religious poetry in England . . . Browning, Patmore, Gerard Hopkins, Christina Rossetti are the equals if not the superiors of Vaughan and Crashaw. . . . Mary Coleridge is a minor Christina Rossetti, less accomplished but with her own vein of Gothic fancy. Francis Thompson, like Patmore, is a child of Crashaw, but closer to his father, both in his mental limitations and the jewelled elaboration of his diction," and Robert Bridges, "though he was a Platonist tinged with Christianity rather than an orthodox believer, wrote some of the most beautiful poetry about Christianity in the language—the little lyric on Christmas, the peroration which closes *The Testament of Beauty*."

Of our own period, Lord David says that although an age of doubt, especially among poets, "since 1918 Christianity has raised her head again. The Georgian phase of verse produced the sensitive talent of Mr. Force Stead, and since then two of the first poets of the day,

Miss Ruth Pitter and Mr. T. S. Eliot, have found in Christianity an inspiration. How far Miss Pitter is an orthodox believer her verses do not reveal. But her whole achievement is full of Christian thought and feeling, and it is lit up by the moonlight of her mystical vision, communicated in language of a fastidious nobility." We might have suggested other devout contemporaries who are not represented,—Wilfred Childe, Richard Lawson Gales, Anna Bunston, Shane Leslie, Richard Church, and also many minor writers, actually religious feeling and inspiration have been a feature of much fine occasional verse in recent years,—who perhaps in a single poem have reached Lord David's very high standard of form and content, but his choice is fastidious and eclectic, and he has more than adequately illustrated his subject in the 350 poems he has collected.

M. Felix Rose's " Les Grands Lyriques Anglais " (Paris, H. Didier, 7s. 6d.) is a remarkable work, the first bilingual anthology of English lyrical poetry from Shakespeare to Meredith and Masefield selected and given with a French version by our ardent contributor who has proved himself a poet by the felicity of his renderings. The success of M. Rose's audacious undertaking is explained by the Oxford Professor of French Literature, " Il emploie tantôt le vers, avec les ' licences ' postparnassiennes, tantôt ce qu'il appelle la langue poétique, versifiée encore, mais sans régularité. Dans les deux cas, par delà la lettre du poème, qui lui sert à la fois de guide, d'excitant, et de frein, il cherche à percevoir l'émotion et le vibration secrètes, l'atmosphère interiéure, le *mood* du poète dont l'architecture entière de la pièce a été l'aboutissement, l'affleurement. Il essaie de percer jusqu'au subconscient, il s'en pénètre, s'en soumet, s'en inspire dans le choix de ses vocables, de ses rhythmés et des harmonies." Subsequently and privately Prof. Rudler expresses particular admiration for the Shelley and Kipling translations, which show the diversity of M. Rose's accomplishments. He is equally felicitous with Keats, especially in the resonant " Ode au Rossingnol," and Wordsworth and perhaps obviously, D. G. Rossetti, who is represented by more pieces (11) than any other poet in this catholic selection. Enforced economy of space will not allow us to quote any of these delightful renderings, which we trust will make better known in France our magnificent lyrical treasures. Both English and French readers will find delight in comparing the original text with the happy and sensible French counterpart on the opposite page. Instead of poems we confine ourselves to a few title tenderings which illustrate the translator's freedom, " Ceux qui nous ont quittes " (Vaughan's *Friends in Paradise*), " Le vieux et bons pays " and " Et patait et patata" (*Auld Lang Syne* and *For a' that and a'that*), " Un ange humain " (*She was a phantom*), La glaneuse d'Ecosse (*The solitary reaper*), " L'amie" (*She walks in beauty*), " La vertu de vivre " (*A Psalm of Life*), " Le dernier voyage " (*Crossing the Bar*), and " Bonne mamam Hobard " is

recognisable as the nursery rhyme, several examples of which and of traditional songs M. Rose presents.

A Swinburne selection is the welcome and latest addition to Everyman's Library (No. 961). In his introduction, Mr. Richard Church, the editor, reminds us that " Swinburne had a divine insanity for words. He was a syllable-addict, a word drunkard. He knew no temperance in self-expression. . . . As he grew older, the machinery creaked more, and its inertia carried it on for longer and longer periods after the poetic gesture had been made . . . But this criticism is offered only in the certainty that Swinburne is a major poet, of enormous power, of divine skill. His work is saturated with his personality, and is immediately recognizable, even though by reason of the fact that it is often a parody of itself. With all his prolixity, his metrical technique is impeccable. There is not a poet in our language with a more subtle ear for metre. He does with metre what Shelley did with rhythm, and what Milton did with cadence. And to this he added an exquisite skill in rhyming."

This selection, which makes Swinburne available in popular handy form to a new generation that should appreciate but has almost completely ignored him, may not be entirely adequate. Too many pages are taken up by the complete text of the two classical dramas, *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus*, but the final lesser known chorus of the former is timely as well as characteristic:

From the depth of the springs of my spirit a fountain is poured of thanksgiving.
My country, my mother, for thee,
That they dead for their death shall have life in thy sight and a name everliving
At heart of thy people to be
In the darkness of change on the waters of time they shall turn from afar
To the beam of this dawn for a beacon, the light of these pyres for a star.
They shall see thee who love and take comfort, who hate thee shall see and take warning,
Our mother that makest us free,
And the sons of thine earth shall have help of the waves that make war on the morning,
And friendship and fame of the sea.

The widely-read editor of Everyman's Library, at the end of his autobiography, *Wales England Wed* (Dent, 15s.) describes *Erechtheus* as " the finest play Swinburne wrote." This discursive book is full of literary gossip, never arrogant or unkind, but the best part is surely that telling of early bewilderment and struggle in uncongenial occupations in the North. Of Ernest Rhys, the poet, we are told very little. Whether the friendships and antagonism of authors are of real interest

and importance is the doubt always raised by books of this genre, but this erudite octogenarian is more entitled to attention than the egoistical younger men who make copy out of their really very limited and jejune experiences and emotions. Yet the genial bookish talk of small groups is for their own delight and amusement: in a better organized, less self-centred society the literary talk would be available to larger audiences at first hand. In London in particular the literary salon is an exclusive coterie. Even the learned societies lecture to each other and a select few, despising the interested outsider.

II

In the criticism of surrealist art which is part of *The New Apocalypse*, (Fortune Press), we are told that "all things were to be possible to the believer; this summer the roses are blue; the wood is made of glass; he who sows fingernails reaps a torch."

If one may be allowed to blaspheme—and I do feel that a certain latitude might be allowed in this instance to "a watcher of the skies" into whose ken this new and ill-proportioned planet has swum—it would appear from the above that the surrealist has already been elevated to the level of the Creator, and it is presumably only a matter of time before the Almighty is brought round to thinking in terms of The New Revolt. Indeed, the first line of the hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," takes on a new significance in the light of these disclosures.

I hope Mr. Lucas will not object to my borrowing from his *Ten Victorian Poets* in order to illustrate the surrealist trend of thought. Writing on the often puzzling mode of expression used by Browning, he says: ". . . no doubt it succeeded for a time. It enabled persons who liked puzzles to suppose they liked poetry, and persons afraid of real thinking to fancy themselves intellectual. And the thicker the incense rose from the Browning Societies, the more ragged and rugged his style became. It paid Browning then; since then it is Browning who pays." So, we must hope, will the surrealist pay for his abuse of everything that is fine in English literature. His intellect is expressed perfectly in Browning's first childish verse:

> "Good people all, who wish to see
> A boy take physic, look at me."

But how get it into the head of the surrealist that it is not a pretty sight to watch the effect his physic has on him?

This book contains one sane sentence, "At present, Surrealism at its worst is little more than a party-game. At its best, it is a psychotherapic exercise in the Freudian manner, by which each patient may, over a period of years, discover some of that material which is resident in his subconscious mind." This is from an interesting article by Henry Treece on Dylan Thomas. For the rest, the book consists

mainly of tedious prose and verse, mostly unintelligible or not worth the labour of construing, and of a loathsome story—based on incest—by Dylan Thomas, which makes one regret that the paper-shortage did not come earlier.

In *Kensington Gardens in War Time*, by Humbert Wolfe (Heinemann, 3s. 6d.), the tired and bewildered poet looks sadly on a demented world, and turns to the only sane spot left to him only to find that even here, in this one-time joyful enclosure, war has penetrated in subtle and mournful ways.

People visiting Kensington Gardens in these days of war, are those in search of a lost glory, which they hope to recapture in their memories of happy hours spent amongst the children. Even Peter Pan, Mr. Wolfe feels, is

> " . . . adventuring
> through the trees
> in search (he explains)
> of evacuees."

But all he will find alas! in their stead, is " the shapeless woman from Bayswater," who reads in German of the death of her children in a Berlin park.

Mr. Wolfe has contrived to keep an air of sadness and aloofness throughout his poem; aloofness due to his bewilderment at the strange antics of mankind, and a sadness due (one feels), to a sick man's helplessness in an unhappy world. Kensington Gardens, from the children's paradise, has become a haven for frightened refugees from the realities of the war, and Mr. Wolfe, wandering through its well-beloved paths, prays for a return to sanity and beauty in these pathetically simple, yet penetrating last poems.

> " All along the Broad Walk
> listen how the soldiers talk,
> ghost to ghost and shade to shade.
> 'This was where, (I think) we played;
> This was where we meant to bring
> a girl to match the green of spring;
> this was where we said good-bye
> to all of that. I can't think why.' "

Mention has already been made above of *Ten Victorian Poets*, by F. L. Lucas, (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.)—a very lucid and optimistic work. I say " optimistic," because Mr. Lucas has, on his own admission, written this book in order to encourage a wider reading of poetry by a wider public, and it is regrettable that a book written in such a worthy cause should appear at this unfriendly time. " The present age," says Mr. Lucas, " reads too little poetry . . . yet we need it. It is not a luxury. It is something without which life re-

mains one-eyed." Mussolini said much the same to some members of The Poetry Society in February 1937. *Hodie quantum mutatis!*

Mr. Lucas' scholarly studies of Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, Morris, and other Victorian notabilities who helped to make that period significant in the history of poetry, will do much towards increasing the interest of the reader in the actual poetic works of the authors under review. To see the workings of a poet's mind in the light of his background, his loves, his convictions, gives added vision to the picture of a cherished masterpiece, and, often, understanding when the Master fails us.

Mr. Lucas modestly states that to those already with a knowledge of Victorian poetry, this book will offer little that is new. If this is so, then it is compensated by the fact that those familiar with the poets of that period will appreciate an intelligent and far-reaching survey, while others will be aided towards a sound and fine understanding of the character of the period.

Those who care to turn back to the November 1936 number of the REVIEW will find two entertaining pages of wit and wisdom culled from Mr. Lucas's *Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal.*

Mr. Charles Woodhouse, who has appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW, has had a little volume of poems, *The Black Rose*, published at 1s. by The Harmony Press. The publishers inform us that he is a milk-roundsman, and that he has been farm-labourer, pigman, and also, like three rather more famous personages (two ancients and one modern), gardener, carpenter, and house-painter. This information may tickle the ears of the groundlings, but is irrelevant for those who know that the Muses scatter their gifts in utter scorn of *Debrett* and the *Almanach de Gotha*. Mr. Woodhouse dreams dreams, and

> By the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.

Usually he writes with music and dignity, but he occasionally has strange technical lapses. Thus in a poem which by its structure appears to have been designed as a sonnet there are the lines

> The beat of hearts amidst the wind and rain,
> Among the briars, with their anger torn, vain ;
> Strong hands that hold to love and life in vain.

Now, the second of these lines, however it be read, limps clumsily. And as regards rhyme, one of the first things learned about the structure of poetry is that a sound cannot rhyme with itself. There are, indeed, no *laws* of poetry, i.e. rules which can be broken only at the cost of fine or imprisonment. But just as there is the Common Law of the land, based on immemorial agreement as to what is fair and right, so there is a Common Law of poetry. Quite apart from mere changes of fashion, like the dropping of nymphs and shepherdesses,

certain things please and others displease. The punishment for writing the latter is that you will simply be left unread. To define the former is impossible, but the poetry-lover introduced for the first time to something said by Catullus two thousand years ago, or by Homer a thousand years earlier, feels at once that it is poetry and that it might have been written to-day.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

III

Although the Sunday papers still devote half their much reduced space to reviews (and advertisements) of new books that seem strangely trivial and inconsequential in these terrible days, present conditions, and paper shortage have affected the output of books within our particular scope. The war is a stern censor. The individual volume, promising and otherwise, has disappeared; more notable books such as a new Blunden volume, G. M. Young's selection of Thomas Hardy's poems that should have marked the centenary, a definitive collection of Scots poetry, are held up. The most worth-while volumes that have emerged are the Whistler and Auden poems and three anthologies that should be particularly valuable at this juncture and because of it should find an abnormal number of users.

There are inevitable difficulties and delays over publishing these days, especially where poetry is concerned, and authors not infrequently adopt the method of having their work privately printed in the locality that is their temporary home. A second volume of *The Tread of Time* by Margaret Egerton has appeared in this way. The poems have the same freshness of idea and integrity of thought of the earlier volume and, in addition, a more efficient handling of the themes. "Fishing the Stream of Words" endorses the truth that a writer must live before he can write:

Sitting beside the stream of words
I waited long.
Puzzled that none would string together
Some thought on time or space
Or tale of weather
To make a song.

I could but utter
Some halting thought
From volume of the past
In which I'd sought.

Floating among the sedge
My fish seemed moving there,
Near rustling water's edge
Close hidden in its lair.
Is my theme caught at last?

And then I heard a voice
Far off above the flood :
" This shall not be your choice
Leave fishing for your food.
Spring in and swim !
If you are not alive
No thought of yours will thrive
By force of lung or limb.
Through action you must come
Into your own kingdom."

In *Under the Downs* (Combridges, Hove, 1s.), Enid I. Carter writes mostly of her own countryside with a loving and detailed pen. Where she adds the music of rhyme her lines gain in poise, for blank verse can fall a little flat on the ear. Though the Downs do not limit her vision or sensibilities, and she can write on such other themes as Big Ben, motor-cars, and Tutankhamen's Trumpets, they often remain a background to her themes. When they are in the forefront her verse is at its best, as in " Moonshine in May " :

Two giant blossoms in the tranquil sky :
A rose of fire, the sun burns to the west !
The moon, a pallid lily in the east,
Soon, with ungathered beauty, yields
Her amber light to downs and empty fields,
Where labour is laid by.

Along the darkening margins of the lane,
In tangled grasses of its hedgerows, pearls
Of stitchwort gleam ; and a green wave upcurls
With foam of wild parsley-flower,
Fringing the path that climbs the hill. . . . The hour
Begets exquisite pain,
When from the thin shade of a woodland tree
The nightingale begins his lovely plea.

The Backward Son by Stephen Spender (Hogarth Press) is not a brilliant example of the poet as novelist. Slight, short, mildly unpleasant, unconvincing and indefinite, it fails to illustrate the prefatory T. S. Eliot quotation, and does not justify his publishers' claim that " his prose is distinguished by the same originality and style as his poetry unless they intend to depreciate the latter, nor do the commonplace doings of those disagreeable people add a new chapter of surprising richness to the imaginative history of the author's generation." Terms such as " fruit salad, his favourite pudding " and " stammering lessons " may be " unique " but they are not precise or distinguished.

The significance of Mr. W. G. Archer's scholarly study of the ritualistic miming of the Uraons (*The Blue Grove*, Allen and Unwin, 8s. 6d.) lies rather in its ethnological implications than in any intrinsic merit their poetry may possess *per se*.

The Uraons are an aboriginal people inhabiting the Chota Nagpur region of Central India, and these simple verses are chanted while they indulge in their tribal dances, which may be just the natural expression of their joy in life, or may be associated with marriage ceremonies or the cultivation of crops. Thus the student of ethnology is more likely to find the contents of interest than the poetry-lover or verse critic. The Uraon lines, with their loose structure and lack of a regular scale of feet, are typically eastern, and their simplicity and directness are attractively rendered in the author's translations. But they can scarcely be judged by the standards of occidental verse ; they cannot be divorced from the dancing and miming of which they form an integral part, and which remains their sole justification. There is a helpful foreword by Mr. Arthur Waley.

That Dr. F. S. Boas was the inevitable (as well as the most genial) chairman for the Marlowe Commemoration meeting is further proved by his new biographical and critical study of the famous, ill-fated Elizabethan dramatist (Clarendon Press, 15s.), the culmination of more than forty years' study and research. Its appearance now should not be eclipsed for it is actually timely " when we are witnesses of double-crossing and megalomaniac fury as rampant as in *The Jew of Malta* and *Tamburlaine*." We can only summarise briefly, not criticize, this erudite and very readable volume. On the biographical side, recent new evidence regarding Marlowe and his associate enables Dr. Boas to show that Marlowe was not as unhappy in his life as tradition has depicted and to furnish more documentary evidence and deductions concerning his murder. Perhaps the most personal and helpful sections of this book are those devoted to critical interpretation of the plays and poems which are analysed in detail with special attention given to the extent and quality of classical influence on Marlowe throughout his work, and a case is stated for his authorship of *Arden of Feversham*. The influence of Marlowe through the centuries is traced. Dr. Boas's summing up being that although he was neglected by his immediate successors later generations have increasingly realized that " Marlowe's ' magic ' within its narrower circle, is as potent and inimitable as Shakespeare's, and still wields its enchanting spell. When he died by violence before his time can we wonder that the tragic Muse was inconsolable and exacted retribution by breaking the mould wherein he had been cast ? "

Margaret E. Layton's *Poetic Pilgrimage* (Northumberland Press, 4s.) makes a wide appeal at this time of dire threat and crisis. The Weardale poems are particularly opportune : poems of place have a poignant

interest now. They stimulate remembrance of and affection for a lovely countryside which

> " lights the gloom of all the squalid parts
> Fringing the debris of industrial flow,"

reminding us that

> in the fields at Harperley
> The corn is growing still,

that " the curlews are calling over White Kirkley " that " there are witches down in Dingley " and " a broad high row in Darlington," although no longer cobbled, and in liquid lines describing picturesque scenes and incidents:

> By Harperley and Bedburn, Woodlands and the Grove,
> By Witton on to Wolsingham, Stanhope and Eastgate,
> By Waskerley and Tunstall up to Backstone Bank,
> By Frosterley and Broadwood and on to Rogerley,
> By Dryderdale, St. John's to Shipley and the Shull,
> By Swinhope down to Westgate, from Kilhope to Wearhead.

We are reminded too, in sympathetic homely verses on miner, moulder, quarryman, farmer, shepherd, household worker, that hard, persistent labour struggles and serves " where the Wear turns and swirls " and in these 240 pages there are many simple illuminating devotional poems, frequently of rare beauty and distinction, in spite of many inversions, faulty scansion and other technical flaws.

Helen Elizabeth Ross (Winnipeg) expands Keats's Epitaph in lines that are practically all quotation of or reference to his poetry, in which many of the most beautiful lines deal with some form of water, anticipating and justifying his own epitaph :

> " Whose name was writ in water "—in the streams
> That went by voiceless ; in the pearly seas ;
> And in the everlasting cataracts,
> And all the headlong torrents of his dreams ;
> In mists of autumn—there his name is borne—
> In clear rills that a cooling covert make
> 'Gainst the hot season ; and upon the foam
> Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn ;
> In moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of pure ablution round Earth's human shores ;
> Or where, for Saturn, Naiads, 'mid their reeds—
> Cold fingers pressed to lips—a silence ask. . . .
> Graving on stone no lasting name ensures,
> But his was " writ in water "—and endures.

You are doing a beautiful work, carrying on your magazine in these difficult times, so that the things of the spirit " will not perish from the earth." Meanwhile, " Cheerio, the Cause is still the same." Christine L. Henderson, Montreal.

SYMBOLISM VERSUS REALISM: A VERY SHORT REJOINDER

I AM grateful to Mr. F. E. Slade for the very kind terms in which, in the introductory paragraph of his article *Symbolism versus Realism*, published in the May-June number of THE POETRY REVIEW, he refers to my essay on C. J. Brennan and the doctrines of Symbolism. But, having greeted me so nicely at the outset, Mr. Slade goes on to show, in the plainest way possible, that, in his view, the principles I defined and defended are no more than a jumble of illusions and errors evolved by homuncular "faddists," pygmies striving to overtop the authentic giants of poetry; and that in the nature of things these principles are bound to issue in the sterile futilities which so far (in Mr. Slade's judgment) are the only achievement of those who have sought to work in terms of them.

Of course, it is impossible to prove to Mr. Slade's or anybody else's satisfaction that a part of Brennan's poetry has the high merits I claimed for it. One of the drawbacks—and part of the glory—of true poetry, as of all forms of high beauty, is that, unlike mathematics and logic and other purely intellectual creations, it is not amenable to proof of any kind. One recognizes it at once for what it is, or else one has no vision for it, and remains outside it, and can have nothing but external judgments about it; in the former case, nothing more is strictly necessary, and even the happiest critical remarks can only reinforce a truth already possessed in its fulness; in the latter case, nothing can be done to give even the beginnings of the vision that is wanting; all critical remarks, however just, can only be talk about the essential thing, but the essential thing itself is not grasped at all. In the province of aesthetic appreciation, in so far as fundamentals are concerned, the recognition of beauty is immediate, one proceeds at once to the heart of the matter; there can be no induction by stages from ignorance or negation or scepticism to the conviction of sure and vital knowledge. I cannot then do anything to convert Mr. Slade to my feeling as to the intrinsic value of the work of Brennan and Mallarmé and other of the Symbolist writers; all I can do is to reaffirm my belief that at least some lovers of poetry in its purer states will find much to admire and cherish in that work—read without any prepossessions and demands foreign to it, and taken on its own very individual terms.

I can also point out certain misconceptions on the part of Mr. Slade. To begin with, he makes it obvious that he is not prepared to take Brennan's poetry on its own terms; that he applies to it standards and tests which it rejects at the outset, and to which therefore it is not amenable. In other words, he does not read it as it should be read; he reads it according to norms which are alien from it, and quite naturally therefore he finds that it fails to satisfy those norms, and so he has no difficulty in proceeding to the conclusion that it is a thing of little worth. That, however, is to refuse to give it even a mongrel's chance; and it is also to embark on criticism of the most profitless kind. One

might as well try to assess Gothic architecture in terms of the values expressed by such a building as the Parthenon; or a play of Sophocles in terms of the aesthetic principles governing the structure of the modern novel. For Mr. Slade says quite explicitly that in reading Brennan's poetry he was looking for "clues," was seeking comfortable paths of "continuation," was trying to elicit logical "cohesion," just as though he were worrying out the tantalizing enigma of a cross-word puzzle; and he tells us that he put his back into it, and did some devilishly "hard thinking," but that he got nowhere in the end. Morally, no doubt, his perseverance was laudable; but aesthetically it can only be called fatuous. For, as I think I explained sufficiently clearly even in the very narrow compass of my essay, Brennan's poetry is determined by principles which are not meant to yield—or not meant to yield in anything but an incidental and subordinate way—any of the things which Mr. Slade was bent on extracting from it with so admirable an energy.

Mr. Slade is misled by the denomination "Symbolism." This term is unfortunate as applied to the poetry in question, for it brings into undue prominence and makes principal what is only one of the constituent elements of that poetry, and one that is not of generative or central importance. The chief thing for this aesthetic is to work as much as possible in terms of far-reaching suggestion, to obtain as much as possible poetry in its purest or most absolute state, and to eliminate as much as possible modes of expression—all elements whatsoever—belonging to other categories, and whose proper function is quite different. Towards this great end Symbolism is no more than one of the concurrent instruments; the profounder musical resources of words (an altogether different thing from those of instrumental music, and also from those of words set to that species of music) would be recognized by such a Symbolist as Mallarmé as having a higher place in the hierarchy of the contributory forces. I have not the space even to indicate other members of this hierarchy, about which I said something in my essay. Mr. Slade also goes wrong in giving to the word "symbol" its usual sense; for him it is manifestly only another name for metaphor. As I indicated in my article, the symbol which thoroughgoing Symbolists would fain command has a depth of meaning, a metaphysical reach of significance, that gives it a station far above this device of rhetoric of the most rudimentary kind.

Mr. Slade quotes lines of Byron and of Keats and triumphantly asks whether they are not immeasurably superior to any of the poetry I quoted from Brennan. I am not dismayed by the challenge and I certainly think the best of Brennan's verse is far superior to Byron's lines, which are no more than hearty rhetoric, and have no content of genuine poetry at all. I would also say that some of Brennan's verses are even superior to the lines of Keats quoted by Mr. Slade, although these latter, unlike those of Byron, have a force of true poetry moving through them. Mr. Slade would have been on safer ground had he

quoted the stanza from the same poem containing the " perilous seas in faery lands forlorn " and the " magic casements " opening on to the inner glories of poetry. But these lines are greater than the ones he cites precisely because they are more " Symbolist," in the most esoteric meaning of that word. In them Keats is working in terms of the transcendental suggestion which is the chief concern of the authentic masters of Symbolism.

Mr. Slade's main mistake is failure to recognize that these latter, so far from being " faddists," are simply continuators of the tradition of the greatest poetry of Europe over the past two thousand years (but more especially of course of the development that tradition has received in the modern as distinct from the Graeco-Roman world). Their aim is to push further ahead, to take poetry to the furthest heights to which what is best in that tradition has always pointed. As I indicated in my article, there is nothing essentially new in Symbolism; effects of the kind it tries to secure have always existed in greater or lesser degree. The things that Mr. Slade likes—lucidity, logic, plain statement, intellective values—can of course be found in much of what justly passes for the great poetry of the world; but it is not they that constitute it poetry; what makes it poetry is something *over and above* these things; and the Symbolists merely seek to secure immediately and in as full a measure as possible this *over and above* element, and to eliminate or reduce as far as possible the other elements with which in varying degrees it is associated in practically the whole of the poetic output of the past.

Mr. Slade himself at one point seems at least by implication to recognize that pure poetry, poetry proper, is something distinct from the things to which he is so attached, and upon which he would confer the status of a *sine qua non*. He says, speaking of Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*: " There is surely direct statement, easily apprehended intellectually, quite apart from its magic poetic content." Yes, what Mr. Slade classifies under the word " statement " is surely quite apart from the veritable poetry of the lines, and it is to be assumed that it is the latter which is of chief importance for him. Would he not be content—fully content, in so far as he is seeking poetry—to have this latter with no admixture at all of the former? nay more, would he not *prefer* to have just the poetry, isolated (if that were possible) from things which, belonging to a different category, interpose forces foreign to it which can never be fully subsumed by its own specific nature?

The crucial question is, of course, whether one can get rid of these other elements altogether; whether the conditions of language, as historically evolved, are such that the Symbolists' aim is an ideal which can never be fully realized. What is certain is that, as the literature of the past shows, there can be a greater or a lesser degree of approach to the ideal condition; and therefore the Symbolists are justified in attempting to get ever nearer to the supreme perfection of poetry.

Mr. Slade is contemptuous of the aesthetic which aims at avoiding an

impression of work brought to a point of finality beyond which no further progress is possible. This conception is not only a fancy of the German Romantics and those who derive from them. It has been put into practice by artists having no knowledge of these theorists, and working simply at the dictate of their own sovereign instinct. Rodin is one such; and some of the most exquisite painters of modern times could be instanced. And one could find great examples in a more distant past; I need only refer to the fragmentary unfinished statuary of Michael Angelo, the greatest of all sculptors since the best days of the Greeks.

In opposing Symbolism to Reality, Mr. Slade begs a fundamental philosophical question, and once again shows that he has ill appreciated the doctrines lying behind Symbolism. It is far from certain that the subject-matter of realism (as ordinarily understood), which he likes to see accorded a prominent place in poetry, is that ultimate Reality which is entitled to a capital R. He roundly says it is, but that is only his *ipse dixit*, the flourish of the showman trying to impress the public by the noise of his drum. It is much more probable that the word Reality can properly be applied to the transcendental values postulated by the central doctrines of Symbolism. And I repeat that in very fact something transcendental, something over and above all elements of realism, hangs about great poetry, and is indeed that without which it would not be poetry at all; it—this transcendental thing—is the poetry; all the rest belongs to other orders of being, and one of its qualities is that it loses nothing by paraphrase; but the poetry proper cannot be paraphrased without losing its identity altogether.

I have said that "Symbolism" (I wish there were a better name for it) is no new thing, but is inherent in a good deal of the literature of the past. Some of its fundamental principles have even received enunciation in the past. I would draw Mr. Slade's attention to certain of the utterances of Coleridge, one of the very few really profound aestheticians produced by this country. The poet, he says (by which of course he means the truest kind of poet, not the "realistic" poet of Mr. Slade's predilection) solicits us to do nothing more than "to yield ourselves to a dream," and this is excellent Symbolist doctrine. I suggest that if Mr. Slade will simply yield himself to the forces of dream in Brennan's poetry, and not exhaust himself in hard thinking on non-existences, he will find that that poetry is not so negligible after all. Coleridge also speaks of "the irradiation and transfiguration" of baser elements "by a higher power" in poetry of a supreme kind, and this again is aesthetic speech of the kind that is common in Mallarmé. I could increase this list to a very considerable extent. But space is limited, and I will ask Mr. Slade to read and ponder the following pronouncement on the thorny subject of obscurity:

> "Obscurity in affection of words and indigested conceits is pedantical and childish; but where it shroudeth itself in the heart of his subject, uttered with fitness of figure and expressive

epithets, with that darkness will I still labour to be shadowed." These are not, as he will probably be ready to think, the words of some ultra-modern "faddist"; they were written more than three hundred years ago by George Chapman.

One word more in conclusion. A benevolent reader has written to say that my observations on Mr. Green were stringent in the extreme. I meant them to be, and I claim that at no point were they unjust. I simply wrote objectively about his opuscule, and scrupulously measured my speech to the qualities of that very singular production. If that speech was hard, it was because the book was so bad, and that is no fault of mine. It was all the more necessary to show up the shocking weakness of Mr. Green's contribution, as, given his position in one of the Universities of Australia, it is likely to enjoy a large authority in that country, and thus do serious harm to Brennan's reputation, which is already very ill-assured out there. If anyone can prove that I have been unfair in my criticisms, I shall be ready to make a commensurate *amende honorable*; but I strongly doubt if I shall be obliged to do anything such.

RANDOLPH HUGHES.

DR. DAVID HENRY KYES, vice-president of the Chicago Centre of The Poetry Society, at a recent meeting read a paper on *The Essence and Functions of Poetry*, in the course of which he said:

Choice poetry is the supreme product of favoured people who are impelled to write. A resistless impulse drives them. Central truths, powerful and burning desires, similar to deep religious emotions absorb them. Poets, feeling that they are God's special instruments, are alert to every message from Him and they have a compelling desire to give each one a beautiful expression. The poet interprets the highest aspirations and thoughts of men. He gives them a surpassing fulness, depth, and beauty of expression. He is a specialist as a revealer of new, hidden or forgotten truths. He often makes the complex orderly, the hidden explicit, and the marvellous simple. He portrays the loveliness of the unlovely and finds the ideal in the commonplace.

In this practical age, the poet restores and vivifies the broken and deeper harmonies of life. He furnishes artistic delights for all people capable of using them. He refreshes ravelled spirits by giving adequate, valorous visions of life's larger possibilities. The poet is an essential and potent factor in character-building. He assists people in believing and realizing what ought to be. He furthers the larger life, making it more liable and serviceable, by infusing it with emotion, rhythm and music.

The ordinary idea of getting a living, the habit of estimating anything of little or no worth unless it can be exchanged at will for a substantial monetary value, the present economic status and materialistic attitude toward life, have perverted and distorted life's true values.

The most worthwhile realities of our existence can neither be seen nor touched, nor can they be correctly estimated by earthly mortals. A man's vision of God and his capacity to enjoy Him and His beautiful and beneficent forces, do not have an exchange value. Poets have used the experiences of disappointment, grief and disaster to enrich their souls until "humanized by distress" their ideals are set heavenward. Moral and physical courage, wisdom, self-sacrifice and virtue occupy prominent places with mankind, because poets have persistently emphasized their supreme importance.

The poet upholds a true aristocracy—one that all who can and will may enter; not an aristocracy of money and high society, but of refined intellectual and spiritual wealth. The great poet is a great personality. He has been enriched by a variety of experiences until his completeness of harmony and fulness of intensity approach perfection.

After all legitimate criticism of poetry has been rendered, there remains in it an elusive, mysterious, indefinable element that cannot be analysed and which escapes detection. As the real essence of a flower or a beautiful sunset is incommunicable, and indescribable, so are the innate elements of a poem that make it poetic. There are at least two kinds of poetry; that which like the morning cloud, is gone before noon—and that resembling the everlasting mountain that declares more the better you comprehend it.

* * *

"The Death of Jacob Pennycuick" which we have the privilege of publishing in this issue, coinciding with Mr. Fuller's discriminating review in the course of a most pertinent article, is a finer poem than the lovely ballad in *The Emperor Heart*. It has emerged from Mr. Whistler's latest experiments in "free balladry," concerning which he tells us in a letter, "it seems to me that it is possible to ring a great many changes on the strict ballad form, to vary the music continually, without losing sight—or should I say 'hearing'—of that very forceful basic pattern. Of course the old writers, and Coleridge and many others have done this—there is nothing new in the idea—but it should be possible to carry it further, and gain something of the variety of free verse without its limpness."

A Somerset member, paying in advance her annual subscription, adds: I cannot help feeling that the membership and competitions of the REVIEW have made this last year a very full and happy one for me, especially as it has been such a disturbing time for us all. It is surely God's will for us as poetry-lovers and citizens of England to strengthen our love for all that is beautiful and good so that the true Spirit of Man may not be trampled underfoot and lost for ever in the rush of a material world.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

There was some difficulty in choosing out of a large entry. Walter Burton's Epic on Charlemagne could not be overlooked, but is too lengthy for present purposes. He calls upon the spirit of the great Emperor to save us from the barbarians, and his poem is worthy of the subject. The awards are for admirable lyrics, and it is a particular pleasure to make one of them to Miss Redcliffe McKie. The other awards are to: MARGUERITE EDGELOW, Gerrard's Cross; MARGERY SMITH, Nottingham.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

N. M. Bond, Dungannon;
Cloudrider, Budapest;
Evelyn Couchman, Menton;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
Gladys Hunkin, St. Ives;
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth;
P. E. Leaver, Witham;
Irene H. Moody, Sherman, Canada;
Frances Pritchard, Bournemouth;
P. E. Proctor, London, S.W.;
Morwyn Rees, Tenby;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.;
G. Souster, Colchester;
Dorothy Trail, Vancouver;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth.

COMMENDED:

Vere Arnot, Walton-on-Thames;
Enid W. Barry, London, N.;
Lily E. F. Barry, Montreal;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Irene Brittain Bell, Stockton-on-Tees;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
E. B. W. Chappelow, Blackheath;
A. H. Cordwell, Worthing;
Nina Cumming, Hove;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove;
M. Locherbie-Goff, Northampton;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield;
Elizabeth Kentish, Westerham;
Kathleen Rooker Mason, Walsall;
Ida Margaret Mills, Raydon by Ware;
G. E. Mullins, Burnham;
B. F. Pargiter, London, W.;
Juliet Peel, London, S.W.
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Violet Rawnsley, Mentone;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
Joyce T. Rowe, London, N.W.;
Hugh T. Simpson, Blandford;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, Wanstead;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by August 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

The closing date for the Short Poem Competition of the *British Annual of Literature* has been extended to September 30th, for competitors in Great Britain and Ireland. Winning entries in this competition will be chosen for publication in the Anthology of Empire Verse to be published in 1941 by the British Authors' Press, 7 Ludgate Broadway, E.C.4.

Widespread interest has been created by the announcement of a second War Emergency Supplement for *The Writers' and Artists' Year Book* 1940. The first Supplement of war-time addresses, publications suspended, etc., was added to the book on publication. Since this went to press in October last there have been numerous other important changes and A. and C. Black are upholding the prestige of the Year Book as an up-to-date work of reference by the *free* distribution of this second War Emergency Supplement, containing notes of several hundred important changes. It is available to all who have purchased *The Writers' and Artists' Year Book* 1940, and who return to the publishers—or their booksellers—the application card which was inserted in the Year Book. Extra copies of the Supplement are available, price 6d. each post free.

ARTHUR ROW writes: POETRY OF TO-DAY, 55, continues with even tread its good work as Britain's fifth arm—the cultural column. One cannot speak too highly of the three poems by Phyllis Dulce Warwick —" Perpetual Motion," " The Light of God " and " 'Twixt Sleep and Waking," and some very likable pieces of earnest expression are found in Isabel Hawk's " I never Knew " and the sonnet " War Time." Rhoda E. Cutbush does excellent work in her four poems which are full of philosophy and intensive questioning. The single poem " Indecision " by Irene Josephine O'Callaghan suggests a capability of further verse-writing of high quality.

The Rev. W. H. C. Malton gives us an interesting contribution in " At the Death of Tennyson " and the closing lines, agreeing with William Watson's " Carry the last great bard to his last bed," are worthy of quotation:

> So he sleeps: but not another
> From the noblest ranks of poets
> In our land
> Dares to fill his kingly footsteps,
> Nor reach out to take the sceptre
> From his hand.

The Rev. T. Pittaway continues his output of sincere and commendable verse in four poems of which " St. Denis " is the most remarkable, and very beautiful indeed are the two short works by D. E. C. Tomlin. G. E. Mullins supplies four good poems of which " Larks " is the best and on a very high level are the two sonnets by C. R. B. Sumner. Redcliffe McKie continues what she considers to be a crusade of truth

in her two works " A Provincial Cenotaph revisited " and " Traitor's Gate," and H.M. puts much fine craftsmanship in his two great poems " Beyond " and " The Voices of the Night." A very interesting item is " Two Wars " by E. B. W. Chappelow. In this poem, which is addressed to his wife, the poet decries (in sympathy with many others) war and the thoughts of war and with easily imbibed reasoning he shows us the logical termination of a war engineered

By crabbed and cabined minds which have forgot
The hawthorn scent, the lilt of life, the beams
The morning sun on boyhood's pathway shot.

REDCLIFFE MCKIE addresses A CRITIC WHO "DOES NOT CONSIDER POLITICAL AND CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS MATTER FOR POETRY " :

SHALL I again find angels by the spring ?
Or but the strong man armed who must be fought.
What but his shadow mirrors that pool now ?
The boughs, the cowering birds, the tufted marge
Are lost in it—all their sweet greenness lost
Until a stronger exorcise the evil.

Your mirror must indeed be angel guarded,
Your eyes enchanted and your ears withheld,
If no strange darkness chills your secret spring,
No hoofmarks burn the mosses on the brink.
True, no such magic pool was ever mine,
No paradisal birds chequer its crystal,
No Milton echoing flute sings in my ears
As yours, robed, garlanded, high singing Ruth.
The pulses of my heart would drown its treble
If ever such had been, as would it were !
Yet still I ask—such heaven-touched eyes and ears
Are not all ignorant of a darkening world
Nor heart so sensitive indifferent ?
At least I've pyred my last dropped autumn leaves,
Burnt offering for my murdered angel, freedom,
And rather make my noteless sacrifice
Of sere unloveliness in such an hour
Than hide the crime with coloured wreaths of verse
That twine no living flower—the frost has killed them.
I do not pace the garden paths to-day ;
The flowered phrasing of their bosky curves
Mocks funeral headings staring in the brain,
Year after year, where death strikes unavenged.
My heap of yellow leaves is less than due
To incense such a cloud of silent victims
As every day speeds from the new slave world.

Reginald C. Eva (Hove) indirectly replies to certain recent animadversions in "A Poet":

Now, in this hell of war, my spirit falls
To melancholy, and the lamp burns dim
Of hope, dark memory from the mist recalls
Heard and remembered terror, shadows grim.
It is betrayal—shall my craven mood
Forget the vision that I knew, and soil
The trust I hold? Shall I, who understood
A whisper of God's thought, in fear recoil
From present evil? I have seen a light
Kindled at heaven's own altar-fire; for me
To shew that glory in the blackest night,
To hold and live this faith: true poet he
Who walks in confidence and ever sings,
In light and darkness, of eternal things

Margery Smith defends Living Poets:

If they should fail in what they try to do
As they must fail, though they attempt till death
Say not, when they are gone, they wasted breath
While other men rich in the world's eyes, grew.
Speak this in joy. These men of dreams are true;
They search the winding pathways of the mind;
Thirsty in soul, the truth they seek to find,
To rend the old and rotten faiths in two.

As dying hours turn to living days,
Say that, in thought, these poets aim too high.
They dream, and step by step, they seek to gain
The Peaks of Truth; oh that were greatest praise
To say they live for faith, and when they die,
Know what they sought, none may on earth attain.

Sapper Gerald Souster, T.B.R.E., considers War and the Poet:

My soul is full with laughter and with pain,
My heart exults, and in exulting, weeps:
My memory, treasuring all the store it keeps,
Tells me I ne'er may know the like again.
My heart exults because my country calls,
My soul rejoices that I answer her,
That multitudes of ideal passions stir,
And scattered are my mundane prison-walls.
But memory, holding ope'd the past's rich door,
Points to the musics heard, the poems penned;
The sunsets witnessed and the summers' pelf
Denying even in peace my mundane self,

And speaking art's pursuits as great an end
As all the fine hysteria of a war.

ARTHUR ROW (HEREFORD) defines THE POET :

Mine eyes are sacred to me : none behold
What still is given to my soul to see,
Nor what mine ears can gather from the fee
One pays to chaos or to lifeless gold ;
For yet my sighing spirit can unfold
Faint far off mysteries of lands to be,
And with my secret silent unseen key
Ope I fast records which the Dead have scrolled. . . .

And I can sing of joys that are no more,
And with strange sorrows cool the day's long heat,
Tell of fierce sunsets on the westering shore,
In dusky byways trace the glittering feet
Of folk unknown, and 'midst the eternal roar
The hush of moonbeams and the sleeping street.

THE HON. ELEANOR NORTON directs SOME MODERN POETS TO BEAUTY :

Since all the poets down the centuries
Have served you with their deepest, purest tears
Return to us, for inspiration lies
Supine and pallid. Down the war-stained years
The dust is blowing, and too rarely now
The stars seem painted with their early gold,
Whilst poesy has veiled her lovely brow
And fled afar into the woods of old.
Return to us, as, long ago, you came
To iris-girdled Greece, and so restore
Our ancient splendour and prophetic flame :
Bid us revive the souls of men once more.
And teach us that, through transient chaos, gleams
Transcendent hope and immemorial dreams.

JOHN DE LINGEN addresses LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE :

When first I held Thy diamond-gleam of words,
I tried to weigh it,
Deeming myself a jeweller grave.
I took my gossamer-threaded balances, with cups of crystal . . .
So many carat-weights of silver—
To weigh the filigree-work that enmeshed Thy diamonds . . .
So many carat-weights of gold—
To weigh the Diamonds themselves !

And I thought :—
" Was ever, since men began to carve,
Such fine, hard splendour chiselled into words ? "

Then I weighed . . .
But the glamour escaped my balance,
And trickled down on the floor, and evanished.
—Though the light of it, on the floor that it touched,
and the edge of the table,
Still shines.
And I said :—
" Was ever, since women began to weave,
Such moonlight magic woven into words ? "

And I took Thy diamond-gleams once more,
For scrutiny of eyes and fingers, grown cunning in jewels
through many long years . . .
But lo !
With bony fingers, I was handling living stars !
And I said :—
" Did ever, since the Sons of Morning sang,
Such limpid glory flow through human words ? "

This war, mechanical, implacable, ruthless, has not produced the efflorescence of fine new verse that poured in from all ranks in training camps and trenches during the last war, and the little that has emerged has been poor and trite. But one distinguished and spirited poem of this genre has reached us from a Lancashire Royal Artilleryman, Sergeant J. J. Rea, who tells us he has had no training in this form of writing, " indeed at nine I terminated my schooling : "

What will you give me, England,
That I may beat the foe,
A host of ships, a host of planes,
A host of guns, I know;
The might of dauntless marching men,
Of women at their posts,
The wealth of mighty Empire?
These are no idle boasts,
All these you give me, England,
That I may reach the goal,
But God, how meagre are these gifts,
Without a valiant soul.

What will you give me, England,
That nations may be free,
A sea of blood, a sea of tears,

War's wrath and misery,
The cries of stricken weeping wives,
Of children at their knee,
The pillaged peaceful homesteads,
From whence our people flee?
All this you give me, England,
War's grim, and bloody toll,
Oh God, give me the strength to bear,
Oh God, inspire my soul.

What will you give me, England,
When Victory is mine,
The right to live, the right to love,
And Liberty divine,
The joy of countless human souls,
The downtrodden and the slave,
Man's joy at his deliverance,
From tyranny's foul grave?
All these, you give me, England,
Land of the brave and free,
Oh God, how much the nations owe,
Dear Motherland to thee!

At the thirty-first general business meeting of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) held at 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on May 7th, 1940, the Chairman (Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, J.P.) in presenting the annual financial statement and balance sheet on behalf of the General Council, stated: "The deficiency shown on the Balance Sheet is due to causes that will readily be understood—partly to the exceptional expenses involved by the change of premises but more particularly to the partial collapse, in the autumn, of the Verse Speaking Examinations which are now our major source of revenue. Obviously we are not alone in this effect at the outset of the catastrophic war. Some recovery has been shown in the first term this year and, unless events still further handicap this activity, we ought to be able to make up the deficiency out of income. Special attention is now being paid to the extension of the examinations if circumstances will allow.

"It is also somewhat reassuring to be able to report that up to date this year the receipts from the members' subscriptions have been maintained, but not commensurate, however, with the efforts made and the necessity for increasing this source of revenue very considerably in order to counterbalance the possible falling off of receipts from auditions and absence so far of the greater public inclination towards poetry that became apparent in the last war and led to very considerable increase in membership and the sale of THE POETRY REVIEW. We are also feeling the effect of the suspension of the meetings of our principal

centres which, with the increasing economic stringency, may lead to a falling off in renewals. On the other hand, a considerable number of local and general members have expressed gratification at the Society's work and continuation. Typical examples of this have been published in THE POETRY REVIEW, and a few have voluntarily increased their subscriptions in consequence. Thanks are also due to those members who have contributed to the Establishment Fund, giving material assistance towards meeting the extra expense of fitting up the new quarters, towards which also we have to acknowledge the balance of Mrs. Bartlett's previous contribution of $1000 for a similar purpose.

" How widely THE POETRY REVIEW is appreciated is also indicated by the tributes from the members to its effectiveness quoted in recent issues, and during the past year, at the request of the British Council, we have been sending copies to about fifty national libraries and institutions in foreign countries, chiefly on the continent of Europe. The imminence of war last year further limited the advertising revenue of THE POETRY REVIEW, but again some recovery has been experienced and we trust that conditions will allow the regular publication of the REVIEW with some extension of its circulation, although the size may have to be reduced owing to the cost and scarcity of paper."

The balance sheet and financial statement were adopted and thanks accorded the hon. auditors, Messrs. Godwin and Taylor, A.C.A., who accepted re-election.

The General Council were elected, with the addition of Mr. E. Guy Pertwee, who had long been actively identified with the Society as a vice-president and the examiner for the Gold Medal for verse-speaking.

At the subsequent statutory meeting of the General Council, Lord Kennet of the Dene, Mr. C. Oscar Gridley and Mr. Charles Tennyson, C.M.G., were re-elected President-General, Chairman of Council and Honorary Treasurer respectively, and were warmly thanked for their continued invaluable services. Mr. Tennyson was appointed a trustee in place of Mr. J. Frederick Tilly, whose resignation owing to ill health, after many years intimate official association with the Society, was received with great regret. The Executive Council was re-appointed, with the addition of Mr. Guy Pertwee and Mr. Curt Peters. The election of Lady Watney, the Earl of Lytton, Mr. Clifford Bax, Miss Clemence Dane, Mrs. J. Hancock Logan (Chicago) as vice-presidents was confirmed.

The Lady May of Weybridge will preside at the first of a new series of Friday matinées in aid of the Red Cross Society at 33 Portman Square, W.1, on July 5 at 3 p.m., Miss Violet Vanbrugh and Mr. Raf de la Torre opening the readings. Subsequent readers will include Miss Dorothy Green, Miss Curigwen Lewis, Miss Audrey Russell, Miss Renee Aschenson, Miss Joan Greenwood and Miss Sylvia Read.

PROMETHEUS 1940

DARK bird of God, who on the Caucasian height
Daily devoured the enchainèd Titan's flesh,
Which a false healing comforted at night
Only that dawn should tear the wound afresh,

By God a demigod was tortured thus,
And here I stand, like him a demigod,
Tortured by woe unassuaged, continuous,
That rends my soul and drains my living blood;

And night herself alleviates not the pain,
Rather is anguish ten times multiplied,
Nor do I ever hope to drink again
The passing opiate of an eventide.

Few years ago my life was otherwise;
I too would kindle fire in mortal hearts,
I too would still the multitudinous cries
Of cold and hunger with appeasing arts.

I with my brother Titans thought to heap
Mountain on mountain till we struck the sky,
And overthrew the embattled hosts that keep
Exultant watch o'er man's adversity.

We would take arms against the malicious Powers
That hurl the thunderbolt through blazing air,
And cleave abysses mid the snow-capped towers
Crashing in gulfs that lay earth's furnace bare.

Great schemes we would with artful skill contrive,
Bridging the chasms, guiding the lightning's flow,
Scattering darkness, to maintain alive
Poor shivering denizens of the fog and snow.

Something we did accomplish, part by part;
We taught the vacant air to diffuse the sound
Of fullest music, and from a lover's heart
To speak far-distant love the world around;

Man rises upward to the icy bound
Of the stratosphere beyond the vulture's flight;
He swims upon the ocean's deepest ground,
And searches caverns of perpetual night.

So much we have accomplished; but the Powers
Malignant watched our striving, and they sneered:
"These puny creatures of the fleeting hours
Attempt to mitigate the doom they feared;

"They live, they prosper in their childish way,
Proud of their toys, beguiled by a foolish dream
That a kind Father listens when they pray,
And checks the earthquake and the fiery beam—

"A loving Father, who would give them peace,
And hold them safe in arms omnipotent,
Or wing them to a realm of endless ease,
Uplifting hearts with toil and sorrow bent.

"Fools! for they recked not what a blasting stroke
We had prepared to shake their loving souls,
When on a sudden, shrouded in poisonous smoke
They turn to slaughter amid the thundering rolls

"Of quick explosions, crumbling far and wide
Imperial cities into dust again,
And palaces, and farms of the countryside,
And the fond churches and the souls of men.

"The winds sweep loud with screams from human lips,
Man butchers man, and o'er their butchered young
Mothers watch silent as the lifeblood drips,
And the womb's labour limb from limb is flung.

"We have strewn cruelty upon the earth,
And habit stifles mercy at the sight
Of orphaned children moaning in the dearth
Of food and comfort through the livelong night.

" And beauty sells her body to the lust
Of savages who grudge the penny fee—
A woman's treasure hardly worth the crust
Which hunger bargains in extremity."

Dark bird of God, I cry, Go ! only go !
Draw out thy talons from my sleepless brain !
I have lived long, and life has made me know
Worse than the worst thou tellest. All is vain ;

The life we Titans strove to build so fair,
That radiant life, now topples lower down
Than slime primeval. Man sits glorying there
Throned upon skulls, crowned with a bloody crown.

All, all is vain. Yet on this earth I've known,
In this my length of days, just once, just twice,
A human spirit whom neither crown nor throne
Could to the deeds of infamy entice

From the thin pathway of the eternal Law
Which is not of to-day or yesterday,
But like a secret thread without a flaw
Guides an uncertain wanderer on his way.

If I, just once, just twice, in length of days
Have known that steadfast guidance at my side,
Thousands of travellers on their devious ways
Have known the same, by thousands multiplied.

So in the vastness of the Southern skies
Dark spaces lie, unfathomed, blank, unknown,
But in their depth the Southern Cross may rise,
A guide through oceans, unperturbed, alone.

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

AN AMERICAN'S BALLADE TO ENGLISH FREEDOM

ENGLISHMEN, your cousin's pride
Is rooted in an English lane,—
In thoughts and dreams your countryside,
Has borne to bloom for us again:
Your poets wander in my brain;
Your heroes planned our destiny;
But have they lived and died in vain
To keep the Isle of Britain free?

Our English tongue has long decried
Tyrannic rule of God's domain;
The English soul has deified
The spirit born to burst the chain;
But dares that spirit yet sustain
The English sword of liberty?
Remember Drake defying Spain
To keep the Isle of Britain free!

We penned our faith; the ink has dried;
And Jefferson's great lines explain
An English heart that had applied
Those English dreams since Alfred's reign.
The heights of Bunker Hill attain
Historic glory's tragedy:
The blended blood of brothers slain
To keep the Isle of Britain free.

Envoy

Englishmen, Crimea's plain
Is dyed with crimson prophecy:
The Light Brigade must charge again
To keep the Isle of Britain free.

California. CULLEN JONES.

May I say what cheer and joy THE POETRY REVIEW brings to me these darkened days. Amid much fine work I greatly admire the distinguished and beautiful poem "Hands" by "Cloudrider": D. E. OSBORNE (Wakefield).

LOVE AND WAR, 1940

ONLY those men can be said to have discovered selfhood who find out the truth and act in accordance with it. In its basic form this truth is an awareness of one's own character; but to be complete it must also include an awareness of the world, the evils in which one lives and the ways in which they can be combated. The man who does not act as his awareness demands is a traitor to himself and to the community. He becomes like Auden's *Dover* a town in which nothing is built.

With poets and writers the problem becomes more individual. If the poet does his duty as a poet this is more important than his duty as a man. For this reason poets are often greater on paper than they are in person. But with all great poets the personal negation does not exist. Milton could not have written *Paradise Lost* and failed to have faith in God. The Pope of *The Dunciad* had no friends among the dull. The Byron of *Don Juan* could not help being romantic. The character is in the writing; otherwise the writing is artificial and worthless.

Selfhood in modern times is largely the gradual extension of love over strife. At one time love was to kill someone else for a sweetheart's prestige. Later it was to fight for one's friends against their enemies, and Lovelace taking up arms for King Charles could write back to Lucasta:

> "I could not love thee, dear, so much
> Loved I not honour more."

And all the time love included fighting for one's country whether right or wrong against rival countries, while women wept for lovers performing a necessary sacrifice. But to-day the true lover is the universal lover and the only justification that the individual has for going to war in 1940 is not to secure the success of his own country, but to prevent fascism, a weapon of purely mechanical efficiency, from destroying once and for all that freedom on which selfhood and universal love can alone be based.

The above perhaps explains why many of our leading poets are not in these days, warriors for democracy as Brooke, Owen, and Thomas were in 1914–18. The real

warrior of to-day does not fight for democracy, for England, or for France—for since Versailles these have proved themselves the three great failures—he fights to preserve the individual freedom from being utterly consumed in an age of machines and monsters only comparable to Huxley's *Brave New World*. But the great poet is best serving his cause by writing. Thus Auden remains in America, owing nothing to a country which has itself largely denied selfhood, a country which has no better use for its greatest minds than to put them into the infantry or the artillery. Macneice, who is, perhaps, second to Auden, has returned to England to face the future with resignation and a kind of despair. Spender, by the assistance he has given to the founding of *Horizon*, helps to preserve something more permanent than the results of wars neglected and lost by politicians who make selfhood and love the slave to a power lacking even ordinary competence. That is why in these times it is necessary to support magazines like *Horizon*, or to read books like Auden's *Another Time* (Faber, 7s. 6d.) and Macneice's *The Last Ditch* (Cuala Press, Dublin, 12s. 6d.), with which I am at the moment more directly concerned.

The vital poems of *Another Time*, deal mainly with three things, a warning to the world of the direction in which it is travelling, an expression of discontent at the nature of present existence, and the author's release and happiness in a personal affection.

Auden as a prophet has tended to play the rôle of a Cassandra. Edmund Blunden once remarked in an interview that he could not understand why the younger writers were so miserable—after all they didn't fight in the war. They however were looking forward and not back, to the greater war which circumstances were making inevitable—not to the Great War that was finished. To Auden as to Voltaire, "the night was full of wrong, earthquakes and executions."

> "And still all over Europe stood the horrible nurses
> Itching to boil their children. Only his verses
> Perhaps could stop them: He must go on working. Overhead
> The uncomplaining stars composed their lucid song."

And the eight haunting lines of *Gare du Midi* describe the position of civilization at the mercy of madmen :

" a city
Whose terrible future may have just arrived."

But the future is inexorable where warnings are not heeded. Soon therefore it is a question of :

" It's farewell to the drawing-room's civilized cry,
The professor's sensible whereto and why,
The frock-coated diplomat's social aplomb,
Now matters are settled with gas and with bomb."

Until :

" The fishes are silent deep in the sea,
The skies are lit up like a Christmas tree,
The star in the west shoots its warning cry :
'Mankind is alive, but Mankind must die.'

" So goodbye to the house with its wallpaper red,
Goodbye to the sheets on the warm double bed,
Goodbye to the beautiful birds on the wall,
It's goodbye, dear heart, goodbye to you all."

At last the final comment on a sick world remains to be applied from the end of the poem *Spain* :

" The stars are dead ; the animals will not look :
We are left alone with our day, and time is short and
History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help or pardon."

But apart from war and its gradual approach, Auden questions even the happiness of our peace. His *Unknown Citizen* is in the eyes of governments a model citizen. He works for Fudge Motors Inc., pays his Union dues, is popular with his mates, physically healthy, a parent of five, an owner of gramophone, radio and car, and a holder of the correct opinions for the time of the year. The question remains to be asked:

" Was he free ? Was he happy ? "

The answer of authority is :

" The question is absurd :
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard."

Maeterlinck's *Life of the White Ant* supplies a more effective comment ; that is where we are now drifting.

But what about the young intellectual, product of an older University, how far is he a saviour? Auden, a graduate of Oxford, replies:

"And is that child happy with his box of lucky books
And all the jokes of learning? Birds cannot grieve:
Wisdom is a beautiful bird; but to the wise
Often, often is it denied
To be beautiful or good."

The poem *Capital* best sums up Auden's feelings for the deceptions of modern existence, a tale of the great roaring towns, deluding, capturing, and destroying:

"Quarter of pleasures where the rich are always waiting,
Waiting expensively for miracles to happen,
O little restaurant where the lovers eat each other,
Café where exiles have established a malicious village;

"You with your charm and your apparatus have abolished
The strictness of winter and the spring's compulsion;
Far from your lights the outraged punitive father,
The dullness of mere obedience here is apparent.

"Yet with orchestras and glances, O, you betray us
To belief in our infinite powers; and the innocent
Unobservant offender falls in a moment
Victim to the heart's invisible furies.

"In unlighted streets you hide away the appalling;
Factories where lives are made for a temporary use
Like collars or chairs, rooms where the lonely are battered
Slowly like pebbles into fortuitous shapes.

"But the sky you illumine, your glow is visible far
Into the dark countryside, the enormous, the frozen,
Where, hinting at the forbidden like a wicked uncle,
Night after night to the farmer's children you beckon."

Beyond this there is only the escape across the Atlantic, to personal love and happiness:

"So many try to say Not Now,
So many have forgotten how
To say I Am and would be
Lost if they could in history.

Bowing, for instance, with such old-world grace
To a proper flag in a proper place,

Muttering like ancients as they stump upstairs
Of Mine and His or Ours and Theirs."

Thus :

" No wonder then so many die of grief,
So many are so lonely as they die;
No one has yet believed or liked a lie,
Another time has other lives to live."

And in the other time, as in Auden's, there is always :

" The one who needs you, that terrified
Imaginative child who only knows you
As what the uncles call a lie,
But knows he has to be the future and that only
The meek inherit the earth, and is neither
Charming, successful, nor a crowd;
Alone among the noise and policies of summer
His weeping climbs towards your life like a vocation."

Thus Auden once more regaining himself where he can love and is loved would reply now to those who have never understood him :

" All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man in the street.
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky :
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone ;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police ;
We must love one another or die."

Let us hope that some day these words may find a way to cross once and for all that gloomy Atlantic which for ever seems to keep humanity from knowledge of itself and its true destiny.

Macneice on the other hand looks at the world more whimsically, more affectionately. In the spring of 1939 he wonders what the future will bring :

" Will his name be Love
And all his talk be crazy ?
Or will his name be Death
And his message easy ?"

September provides the answer, with :

> " Nelson on his pillar
> Watching his world collapse,"

and Macneice is reduced to wondering whether in a year :

> " Democracy will be dead
> Or what is more to the point
> If I shall be dead."

For Macneice unlike Auden does not separate himself from the war. Where Auden is inclined to wash his hands of it as a prophet whose warnings were not heeded Macneice faces it with resignation:

> " The sky is a lather of stars,
> Jupiter makes a stain upon the bay
> But death is on the waters and no one
> Can drive the war away."

And so love for him has become memories of coffee houses and rooms where " lov hung still as crystal over the bed," memories growing gradually weaker of " days the days will cancel "—a melancholic longing for one who is no longer with him as he waits for the impartial bombs to fall out of the Milky Way.

Finally no mention of these two books would be complete without a reference to the lighter poems, ballads, and poems to people in *Another Time* which are among Auden's best work, and for the five *Novelettes* Macneice includes in *The Last Ditch.*

Whatever the war may do to reputations those of Auden and Macneice are likely to stand. Both have the guts required for survival and both in their latest works have practically avoided their earlier obscurities. If the Auden of *Another Time* is inclined to be cold, it is the coldness of the diamond ; he renounces the world that would not listen to reason. But Macneice remains warm and accepting. Auden therefore is the poet for the individual, Macneice for everyman. Auden would say in his own defence

> " We are lived by powers we pretend to understand :
> They arrange our loves ; it is they who direct at the end
> The enemy bullet, the sickness, or even our hand."

And just as his writing is necessary to the new world and he can only write well where he is in love, so at the moment America is his marriage bed and there for the good of the world he remains. But Macneice—as others are forced to do—prefers to remember (Macneice's love poems are usually sad, Auden's usually gay—in his early work to the point of cynicism). Thus peering into the dark future Macneice cries :

"O my darling if only you were with me
And the old rhythms could be made to work
And the new horror that is the old redoubled
Were not there waiting in the dark.
The bulletins and the gladiators beset me
Casting a blight on the Irish day
And you beyond the clamour of Manhattan
Are terribly far away.

In a land which is a legend for me already,
A dream that has come untrue,
For now, my love, there is more than the Atlantic
Dividing me from you."

And that for everyman is all that remains to be said.

JOHN WALLER.

SPRING IN OUR TIME

MILES of ploughing for steel-sown acres
Mile after mile of metal crops
Sprouting shells !
Spoken truths like worthless stones, chink rolling
Hollow echoes that steel scythes
Cast clattering.
Life carries no message from bursting tips
Nor feet have purpose which walk the earth
Walking where ?
The coupling chains of heaven and earth exploded
Soul has no chance for service here
Ruin raging.
Human spectres on a length of chain
Turn back and forth, to pace again—(with)
Guns grumbling.

E. M. STEPHENSON.

SEA WRACK

THOSE that went down to the sea in ships
That did business in great waters,
Those that journeyed in wastes,
Ploughed temporary furrows in the waves ;
Companions of the gulls,
The star, the hurricane, the fog,
The crescent moon, the ships they sail :
They died.

Death came not from the waters,
Not from their friend the wind :
Death came not from the hurricane
Nor their companion the waves :
Not from the moon, the gull, the star,
(These are friendly things.)
A stuttering, spattering, spouting death
They died.

Alma Mater, Ocean mother,
Leading from land to land,
Cradles them in musing swell,
(Comforting ease of blue serenity)
Or whips them with temper loosed
In frightening frenzy of fearful flood,
Or lulls them with cold, cold kiss.
They died.

Man with a rabid, random reek
Of repulsive pleasure of power,
Leaves death to spout in the wafting wave
Or hasten in hurricane hail.
And they that went down to the sea in ships
Now journey in Trackless Waste.
Beyond the Bourne of No Return :
They died.

J. W. NICHOLSON.

A Highgate member writes : I am very glad THE POETRY REVIEW still continues. I'm sure we all feel that the world needs the help and inspiration of poetry more than ever.

THE PILOT

HE drank when he was hardly seventeen,
And girls disliked his touch.
His hands were never overclean,
His language tiresomely obscene.
He drank too much.

As clerk to a solicitor at Bow
His study was the law.
He studied dogs, which ran too slow,
And women, when the price was low.
Then came the war.

He said that he had always longed to fly,
He liked the sense of power.
His mother wept; he knew not why.
She pleaded, but he said goodbye.
This was his hour.

He gave up drink and smoking, forged his age,
And somehow passed as fit.
He stepped as from a weary cage,
Receiver of a royal wage,
And proud of it.

He learned to laugh, to march with head erect,
And why an army sings.
He learned to value self-respect,
To live as one of the elect.
He earned his wings.

He learned to think, to fight and fly alone,
To hold on to the end.
To face the known and the unknown,
To merge in movements not his own.
He made a friend.

They messed together, raced for every prize,
Proved dear each other's worth.

And then his friend before his eyes
Too far defied the sullen skies,
And crashed to earth.

He heard his voice within the burning plane,
And frantic fumbled through.
They strove to hold him back ; in vain.
Triumphantly he tried again,
And perished too.

He was a child of joyless circumstance,
Wrapped in a narrow span.
Bereft of purpose or romance
Yet this he found, self-governance.
He died a man.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

GENESIS

FROM out the mighty sphere of song,
Articulate music brought him forth
To join that immemorial throng
That walk the latitudes of earth.

So Shelley came, the thunderer,
So Keats and other poets have come ;
Indubitable trumpeter—
You too shall storm Byzantium.

The sword of Ajax is no more,
The Titans gone, the Romans fled,
But he shall go from door to door,
Begging for water and for bread.

If Flecker bled, if Housman died,
If Yeats is lost and Synge is dust,
Be thankful that against this side
The burning shaft of song is thrust.

Prophet and martyr, he shall dare
To sing the planets and the plough,
And cynic time shall let him wear
The laurel, deathless on his brow.

HAROLD VINAL.

DUNKERQUE

THE cry rang out, " Retreat ! "
And men, then five days sleepless,
Answered, " Not defeat."
And they came fighting to the coast—
A little host
Of spent but splendid Britons—
Staggered down the roadway,
The long free
Way to the sea.

Above, the dark planes roared
And poured
Bullets ; tanks pummelled over
The clover
Fields, giving
And getting ; more planes diving
Battered hailstones on the tops
Of lorries. (How the crops
Were spoiled.) The little band,
That could barely stand,
Went on ; the sea grew nearer—
Britain dearer.
They fought still,
And the naval guns grew louder.
The thrill
To British ears was deep,
And British hearts did leap
To homes across the waters—
To anxious wives and sons and daughters.

Oh, could they reach
The open beach?
Under the drifting clouds of night and the roar
Of planes, they came to the shore.
Two days on sand they lay ;
Then came
The little welcome boats, who gave no name ;
Over the running tide they sped.
(Lie some with unknown, not forgotten, dead.)

These
Were Britons who came, swift as the summer breeze,
Daring the riotous tide,
To save those on the Dunkerque side.
They stormed the sea together, ploughed the foam,
And spluttered up a sandy inlet
Crying, " This is home ! "

A voice from the Northern Mountains
Roars to the Southern Downs,
And the East and West lands echo
To cities and towns,
" This was defeat, defeat ! "
And Britain proudly answers,
Her inmost joy complete,
" Blood of my blood are these—
Strong in disaster, masterly in retreat ! "

MARGERY SMITH.

NARVIK—APRIL 10th, 1940

(*To the glorious memory of my uncle, Capt. B. A. Warburton-Lee*)

OUT of the mists of battle, and the ships
Broken and scarred by more than mortal might,
Out of the cold, the tempest, the eclipse—
You won, through darkness, an immortal fight.

There is a quiet when all tears are shed,
When shouting dies and even pride is dumb,
When, beyond honour, the beloved dead
Home to our hearts, so long awaiting, come ;

And in the silence of that after-sleep
When Life itself grows meaningless and drear,
Shall not your spirit brood upon the deep
And keep the evening of our lives from fear ?

Matched with incarnate evil, you have shown
All how to die, and one to live alone.

LETTICE HAFFENDEN.

SCHERZO

Con Crio (*1st Symphony, 3rd movement*)

NOW shall I take my staff—my ashplant sturdy—
and, satchel a'back, wander
Over the forest woods and dry brown commons.
Now shall I sing and laugh with the hurdy-gurdy
of bees in my hearing, ponder
Anew the call and beauty of summer's summons.

Over the forest woods where redbud beeches
are distantly blurred, glowing
Gleaming as glints of sunlight colour and ruffle,
(Late in their breaking moods when everything reaches
forth for a valiant showing,
And spring and summer bend upon May their scuffle :)

Now shall I find in sheath a bluebell sprinkling
under the hedges of spinney,
There shall I let my footfalls lovingly slacken.
Over the common of heath—and last year's tinkling
bells all cracked and tinny—
Strewn with its straw mattress of old gold bracken :

Over the common's laps and folds that slumber
in wet and wild mosses,
Lighting the dark shade, cool and green and deceptive ;
Sirenous sucking traps that first encumber
the luckless life who crosses,
Then as he flounders deeper hold him captive.

Spinning its web on gorse shall soon the dodder
be softly silken, redden
The green and ragged spikes with strand and streamer.
There shall the cattle's course for scanty fodder
be faintly marked, threaden
Its way across the moorland a winding dreamer.

Silent, expectant through the pinewood's brooding
scent ; and a little lonely ;

A little fearful of shadowy, ghostly spilling;
A little quickened, too, by sense of intruding—
cheerful—there where only
Pines with wail and gloom the wood should be filling:

Yet shall I sing my soundless song at my leisure,
and steadily tramp further
Further away from the wail that to world is given;
Having for company boundless, mind-full treasure—
and caring not, were the
Forest and common and I to be swept to Heaven.

C. R. B. Sumner.

CHOICE

I HAD rather pluck me the tree of life
And bathe in the sunwarm Eden river,
And lo I have eaten the bitter fruit
That tasted once man tastes forever.

I have chosen once and none chooses twice,
Its fruit is bitter beyond believing,
But one day I shall eat of the tree of life,
Of the leaf that heals and the waters living.

For only the tree of knowledge yields
The quickened eye and heart and hearing,
Better its tang than the clover fields
With a world stone deaf and a heart uncaring.

Redcliffe McKie.

AFTER

WE will not gather in their fellowship,
But turn away,
In reverence, who leaned on their young deeds.
We will not comprehend the words they'll speak,
But stand ashamed—
Even if duty made us stay at home—
Feeling their England called on our deaf ears.
This shall survive:
"They are our Race, who were the Dunkirk men!"

A. Edward Farmer.

ON READING SHAKESPEARE[1]

SHAKESPEARE must be considered from two angles, as a dramatist, and as a poet; and it is a moot point whether he is equally great in both rôles, or whether he is greater in one or the other.

In the aggregate, it is probably safe to conclude that he is the greatest English dramatist, and, in the dramatic vein, the greatest English poet. But from whichever angle we look at him, there he is, the Shakespeare whom we know and love, "familiar in our mouths as household words," as he himself says.

Now we all realize that as a dramatist Shakespeare expressed himself dramatically, and wrote the plays first and foremost for the stage. It is not intended here to consider the Sonnets and the Poems at all, for they are obviously entirely poetry, and form a subject apart.

The stage for which Shakespeare wrote was the Elizabethan stage, primitive, lacking in the scenic and lighting effects which we know to-day; and by so doing he put himself under limitations which must have cramped his art tremendously. At the same time, however, the plays which he wrote for that primitive stage are the same monumental works which thrill us to-day, as they have thrilled all generations for three hundred years.

On the other hand, at the present time we have a stage technique, in acting and scenic effects, which was probably undreamed of in Shakespeare's day; and his conceptions can be, and are, presented in the most realistic fashion. This, no doubt, is all to the advantage of the drama; but at the same time, Shakespeare is thereby neither more, nor less Shakespeare than he ever was.

The piano of Beethoven's day was not the perfected instrument upon which a Moiseivitch or a Myra Hess charm us now. Nevertheless the Sonatas of Beethoven were as great when they were put upon paper by the composer, and played upon his primitive piano, as they are now interpreted upon the modern concert grand.

It may be said, then, that all great works of art are, in

[1] Apropos (and suggesting the wider adoption of) The Poetry Society's Shakespeare Recitals this autumn.

the higher sense, great both in spite of and through the mediums of their presentation to the human apprehension. In fact, it is truer to say that any work of art is greatest as a concept in the mind of the originator, and if it can be conveyed to other receptive minds with the minimum of material means, so much the better.

Many will say that drama absolutely requires dramatic presentation to make it live intelligibly in other minds. This is of course true; but one must ask oneself whether the plays of Shakespeare are primarily dramas, or whether they are the thoughts of the author put in dramatic form. In other words, was Shakespeare a great philosopher who could not write a treatise, but who had a genius for putting it across the footlights?

Of course he was our greatest dramatist, perhaps the world's greatest, but his works transcend the drama, even when aided by modern stagecraft. Therefore in the highest sense the dramatic medium becomes to some minds unnecessary.

This is the more so because in some cases the dramatic presentations are irritating. One has seen a production of a clever Shakespeare comedy which has caused the beholder to depart in sheer bad temper. No stage production can please all members of the audience equally. The screening of Shakespeare plays may certainly be more realistic scenically, but the poetry of his lines coming out of a loudspeaker is a travesty. Even a perfect presentation, with the greatest acting, leaves something to be desired.

To-day we are at war; we are blacked-out at night, and theatre-going is not the delight which it is in peace time. May one then not offer a plea for the reading of Shakespeare quietly at home? Thereby one obtains a greater insight into the essential philosopher, writing about life, which cannot be lived on any stage. He says, "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players." But surely it is equally true to say that his stage is the world, and that his characters are live flesh and blood, living immortally.

The average human mind has a wider range than any

actor on any stage can represent; and the average imagination is quite vivid enough to picture scenes and characters, so that they pass through the mind more real than any pageant. The reader has leisure to drink in the beauty of the poetry, hearing it as though it were spoken; and to absorb the philosophy more readily than when it is spoken. Perfect elocution is sometimes a siren song which carries one away by its music, and one has missed the something better that is behind it. The reader has the deeper original music before him as long as he likes. He has also this advantage, that he may see the play in his mind as a stage presentation if he so desires, or he may see it as a piece of real life. The average mind is quite efficient at this sort of thing.

The reader may strut and swagger with Falstaff, question with Hamlet, and stand in the ranks hearing King Henry V exhorting him to victory. He is equally at home in Eastcheap, in France, Rome, Venice, or on Prospero's island. He is free of the whole gamut of Shakespeare's music, and it is all contained between the covers of a book. He sits, he opens his mind, and the Bard of Avon fills it. Forgotten are the theatres, even the Irvings, the Forbes Robertsons, the Bensons, the Gielguds; and he is content. Shakespeare has spoken.

FREDERICK E. SLADE.

TIDAL RIVER

ALL the day long, under a haze of heat
The far blue hills have shimmered, tremulous:
But at the sunset hour, when the fierce glare
Of noon is tempered by a still, cool hand—
Then, at the sigh of flower-scented breeze
Beauty is born.

The martins fall through the gold-filtered light
In flight as swift and sudden as the thoughts
Of children. Curved black wing-tips strike
The water's mirror with a flute-thin note
Faint and far-chiming as the temple bells
Of Asian lands.

The great weed-masses stir, begin to move,
Slowly to float along the river crest
In silent spate towards the sea. The reeds
Tremble and bend until their feathered tops
Seem ballet dancers sheathed in silver fire
That cannot burn.

The clotted perfume of the meadowsweet
Rises like incense at the death of day ;
And amber light deepens the willowherb
To nodding crimson stars, each with a cross
Of milk-pale ivory, tight clasped about
Its very heart.

But only those who have endured the day's full heat
Can feel the magic tide-turn at their very feet.

MARGUERITE EDGELOW.

THE FIG TREE BLOSSOMS YET

THE hungry roar of planes
The evening silence stains :—
Against the fading sky
The swallows sweep on high.

From lonely beds is heard
Loud gunfire's murderous word :—
Sweet honeysuckle pale
In darkness does not fail.

At dawn the feet draw near ;
Defenders fight in fear :—
The fresh green leaves extend
Their shade to foe and friend.

So nature's art goes on
When worldly hope is gone :
And beauty's lover learns
To fiddle while Rome burns.

RHODA E. CUTBUSH.

CONFESSION

I DO thee love
Above
All riches of earth,
And where thou art,
My heart
Such fulness knows,
There is no room to hold
Aught other gold.

How should I need,
Or heed
Ruby of rose, or pearl of the lily pale,
When all the jewels of love's treasury shine
Out of thine eyes on mine,
And in the garden of thy heart there are
The blooms divine?

Even from afar
Thou dost on my dull mind a tremor make
Like a star-ripple that the breezes take
Over a quiet lake,

Or a wild glory wake,
As when the sun
Kisses a million raindrops one by one—
See there's one with ruby and sapphire aglow,
As a sun-beam caresses
The dew on her glimmering tresses!
And, oh,
Another's with diamond and opal alight
Like a star in the night,
As round and round in a ring they race,
And jostle and dance and turn,
Till all of their beauty doth absorb
And flash and burn
With the fierce love-lights,
And an iris orb of a myriad sprites
Tiaras the storm-cloud's face!

Yet all that wonder bright,
And the delicate starry gleam,
As naught they seem,
When from the starry height,
All luminous with dream,
Thy spirit doth alight,
A little while by me to bide
For my bright solacing.

Ah, 'tis as though
Earth's pomp and show,
And all her woe,
Some dazzling pinions hide,
And Heaven herself, compassioning,
Did name thee angel once to bring
About my soul
For aureole
The mighty iridescence of Love's wing.

Are not all lovely things
But the swift shadowings,
Over earth's bosom borne,
Of some resplendent wings
Above?

Even as a dove,
O'er green hills at morn,
Casts her blue shadow on the waving corn,
And when she comes to earth,
The shadow's gone,
So when thou com'st to me,
Dear Dove of Heaven,
All other beauties flee,
Lost in the ecstasy
That thou hast given!

Upon this fickle earth
Thou art to me all worth.
For in my winter's bitter dearth

Of bloom and tune,
And in the gorgeous hours
Of fleeting flowers
In June,
Oh, when no more the cuckoos call,
When May-blooms fall,
And when the last lark's carolling,
With scent and pollen thou dost bring,
On Love's own wing,
Tidings of the Eternal Spring!

R. G. DUFF.

"AND THERE CAME A DAY"

"*Come the three corners of the world in arms,*
And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true."—SHAKESPEARE.

AND there came a day
When the faith seemed wanting,
And the dark waters of doubt
Washed at our feet.
Few our friends,
And the sum of our achievement
A fierce regard for those
Who stood at the gate.

And there came an hour
When judgment faltered,
And the four walls of existence
Closed in upon us,
Menacingly:

And there came an instant
When the monstrous barb
Seemed about to flash
To our throat.

And then came the breath
Of our high heritage
From the far courts of the immortals.

Sweetly it came, a healing air,
With sublime surge thro' the hearts and homes
Of Shakespeare's land.
And this people rose. P. E. LEAVER.

THE WRITHING WORLD

THE writhing world looks on in grief to-day
As peaceful byways of the earth are blocked,
While justice and the laws of God are mocked
By warring men, the ancient faith at bay.
Brute-force and jungle-laws conspire to sway
The mob to anarchy. The ground is rocked
By marching autocratic nations flocked
Against democracy, in armed array.

Although the millions fail or fall in war
Defending freedom, faith and home for man,
Ideals do not die, they will survive.
Eternal as Divine intentions are,
They were before the struggling world began:
Immortal verities for which to strive.

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS.

A WOUNDED SOLDIER TO A NURSE

ALL woman's in her face—
Gaiety, tenderness,
Courage, compassion, grace,
Love (in life's lovelessness).

Out of the fires of hell
Into her sanctity
Is to die loved and well,
Or to live heavenly.

"God grant her all she gives!"
Wished one with dying breath:
God grants from one who lives
Love that will conquer Death.

GERALD SOUSTER (Sapper).

A PAINTER-POET

MR. D. S. MACCOLL has won renown both for his profound knowledge of pictorial art and as a painter. For years he ruled the Tate Gallery and the Wallace Collection, and only a few months ago the Royal Academy conferred upon him one of two special awards for paintings of outstanding distinction. Now he has published (Blackwell, 7s. 6d.) a selection of the poems which he has written during the last sixty years. It may be said at once that Mr. MacColl here shows himself to be a "master of the mighty line" in yet another art. Take this from his "Beethoven in war-time," published in *The Times* a few weeks ago: "Beauty forged of shaken air;" Or this, about a lion drinking at midnight from a forest-pool: "The shuddering stars are in the drink he takes." Or take his poem "Poetry":

> To make the battered coin of language strange,
> Stamped in some royaller Chapel of the Pyx:
> Sovereigns and golden Angels give in change,
> And Crowns for sorry lots of two-and-six;
> To build images, out of Sound and Time,
> Brighter than paint was ever; to commend
> Thoughts by a sleight of syllables, or rhyme
> Right as the sudden meeting with a friend;
> To set them numbering, knocking at the heart;
> Throbs of the blood or breakers on the beach;
> Disclosing, by a paradox of art,
> The whole of heaven in the parts of speech.

Do not the words

> "rhyme
> Right as the sudden meeting with a friend"

instantly arrest and satisfy? Are they not of the intimate essence of poetry? And might not the final couplet have been written by John Donne when at his best?

I wish, as a poetry-lover, that Nature, in handing out to that which later became D. S. MacColl a not ungenerous endowment of artistic talent, had ordained that it should all flow in the channel marked "Poetry." A great poem may reach and move thousands for every one person who can come under the spell of an immortal painting. We can always take from our bookshelves the poetry of Dante or

Goethe, but even in peacetime the treasures of Florence and Dresden are a very long way off. The Highlander in Mr. MacColl (I assume, without knowledge, that the name Dugald Sutherland MacColl implies some link with the Scottish Highlands), will remember the old saying: "It's a far cry to Loch Awe." It is the special and peculiar quality of these poems that makes me utter this wish. Nature, I fear, defrauded us of what might have been.

In general Mr. MacColl's poetry is rather austere, but now and then a mordant humour flashes out. Thus, in a poem to his friend Samuel Alexander, the celebrated Oxford philosopher, there is a brief couplet summing up one important aspect of the enigma of sex, one of those thoughts "Which oft were felt, but never so well expressed," the sort of thing about which we ask: "Why has nobody said that before?"

It might have been penned by Aristophanes; so truly so that, with reluctance, I refrain from quoting it.

Members of The Poetry Society may care to know that THE POETRY REVIEW is so economically conducted that reviewers instead of retaining (and probably selling) their review-copies, as is elsewhere the practice, dutifully hand them back for embalmment in the Society's library. In the last half-dozen years I have written in these pages a good many notices of new volumes of poetry. Twice or thrice I have been moved to pay hard cash in order that one of these volumes should become my "abiding possession." To-day MacColl's poems are there. That Aristophanic couplet alone is worth sundry shekels.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

MISS L. MARSHALL, Ancaster House, Bexhill-on-sea: I enclose a renewal subscription for THE POETRY REVIEW and would like to take this opportunity of telling you what an infinite amount of pleasure it gives me in the VI Form here.

I have much pleasure in enclosing my subscription for THE POETRY REVIEW, together with many thanks for The Poetry Society's invaluable activities during these trying times, and best wishes for increased progress and influence in the future. MILLICENT LOCKE, P.S.G.M.

THIS YEAR OF GRACE, 1940

I KNOW not what these days may hold in store
For this my country, Britain, nor what lanes
Her latter sons are destined to explore—
But this I know, through coming time, remains
Rich memory of those effulgent deeds
Of other days, immortal fertile seeds
Urging our youth with emulation's spur,
Re-moulding Britain, ever building her.

Grand deeds of old! Some shine upon the page
Of Britain's story, read from year to year
With homely pride, or told upon a stage
When things are wrought anew, bringing a tear
To many an eye. Some epics all unknown
Are hidden 'midst the maze of time; renown
Comes not to all, though noble lives, unsung,
Shed holiness our troubled days among.

And, Britain, those who love thee know the bliss
Mere thought of thee can bring—the folded hills
And valley meadows green, where zephyrs kiss
Sweet dimpling streams and little eager rills
Lament that Phoebus is too strong; the night
With shrouding loveliness to come, till bright
The seeking moonbeams bathe a darkened land
In silvern splendour, beauty to command.

So may we find in Britain things to love;
The richness of her garment and her sons
Resplendent in the homely, honest groove
Such as their fathers plied—old custom runs
Through centuries with seldom-changing road.
And yet with praise remember an abode
Of piety—the common heart of man
Throughout all lands and through the broadest span!

To-day, O Britain, younger sons arise
On rigid wings to conquer in the skies—
With pulsing hearts, unshaken nerves, to ride
Meeting the hordes of evil as they glide;
Honour these new-born knights, acclaim with song
Epics that to the noblest deeds belong!

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

COW-PARSLEY

HALF-WILD, bird-haunted, the fair orchard lay
There, suddenly I saw a miracle
In the gold sunset of a summer day.
Around the gnarled trunks of the apple trees
Green waters rippled in the evening breeze;
A sea, foam-flecked with flowers.
Transformed by magic of the setting sun
From tall cow-parsley of blue noon-tide hours.
Stirred by soft evening wind the green waves rolled.
Pale foam-flowers as they rose upon the crests
Caught sunset gleams and brightened into gold.
Transparent were those waves as emerald
With shadowy depths around each orchard tree.
It seemed that they must break upon the strand
Of that enchanted land
That saints call Paradise and poets, Arcady.

From the o'er hanging boughs, a blackbird fluted clear
For all to hear
Songs of that land that lay so very near,
Could it be there—
Within that amber glow that shone so bright
Beyond the trunks of apple-tree and pear
That half-revealed, half-hid the western light?

O magic world! O land of ecstasy!
Some reach it upon bended knee
Some in young love's first kiss;
Some by the plaudits of a crowd,
Wild cheering long and loud—
For a great deed of gallantry.

And some are thither raised
When Evensong is o'er
And to the roof the notes of organ soar,
While through the western panes the sunset glows
And the white pillars change to rose.
Then are they carried to that happy shore
Of which the blackbirds sing—
The land of youth, of never-ending Spring—
And some are borne there when a soft wind blows
At sunset, over a green orchard floor
Where wild cow-parsley grows.

FRANCES PRITCHARD.

PRESERVATION

GIVE the world back to God and keep it secret,
Before the last despair breaks overhead;
Gather the senses, lovely sight and sensitive
Hearing, and though by night,
Transplant them from the doomed and dangerous clay
Back to their origin.
Seek out winged faculties, clipped like birds captured,
And speedily loose them from entanglement
So that as swallows over the winter water,
They wheel instinctively back to their South.
Complete the roll call; let not the least of living
Molecules linger now; there's still an ark
Preserving identity, whose proven spars
Weather the final shock, the crash of stars. BRENDA F. SKENE.

RETROSPECT

WHEN at my peril, like Lot's wife,
I turn and look again,
Not on the sinful cities of the plain
But on the panorama of my life,
Stockstill as any post of salt or stone
I stand and stare, amazed to find I rue
The worst and most disastrous things I've done
Far less than those I lacked the pluck to do.

Yes, looking back upon my chequered years,
The distant landscape of past joys and tears,
So small beneath Time's overwhelming sky,
What errors and misfortunes meet my eye!
But still, I feel far less remorse and guilt
For even the tawdriest fanes of shameful bliss,
The most preposterous follies I have built,
The very rankest weeds which I have grown,
Than for those bare and barren places,
Those empty epochs, desert spaces,
Which, from discretion and from cowardice,
I've left ignored, unlaboured and unsown,
Than for experiences I've never known.

Yes, looking back,
I do not sigh "Alack!"
For labours lost and ventures gone awry,
But O, the wild regret for chances wasted,
For fruits of knowledge I have left untasted,
And things I did not try! E. F. A. GEACH.

JUNGLE LIFE

(Thoughts On Watching A Film)

WHAT meaning lies
Behind those wild, inscrutable eyes,
Those weird, and inarticulate cries
That haunt the night?

Is a tiger more wild
Than a terrified woman guarding her child,
Whose anger is tenderness strangely defiled—
An illusion of light?

Is hate but fear?
Stark dread, that makes the spirit hear
The feet of conquest stalking near
On murder's height?

Is lust of power
But weakness in her dying hour,
Fearing things harmless as a flower?
Piteous in plight?

Has worship lit
The brow that fear has cruelly knit?
Could love restore the peace of it? . . .
I would it might. Roberta Shuttleworth.

CHINESE

IT is said there are few love poems in Chinese;
Women were too ordinary for Celestial singing men,
And marriage too obvious a thing to be celebrated.
Romance (if it happened) concerned itself with Emperors,
And immense splendours, and strange, half-legendary Princesses.

Yet there is one little poem, (and it is not about an Emperor)
But it tells the oldest story on earth,—
A girl died young, and she was lovely,
And precious beyond all else to another heart.
Her room is empty, as the world is empty,
And autumn has come to the garden where she walked.

The poem is an Exception; it breaks all the Rules.
But lovers have always broken the rules, since the Beginning;
And every poet worthy the name is an Exception. Vera I. Arlett.

CHARLEMAGNE[1]

WHERE are you sleeping, great lord Charlemagne?
When shall you with your henchmen ride again,
With oriflamme unfurled across the sky
Like sunset cloud adrift when first bats fly,
Proclaiming once again the rule of law
From tortured Spain to where rooks wheel and caw
Round Brocken's natural spires and through her caves,
And sunsets tumble into Oder's waves,
Or gild the rippling of the Rhine's broad sweep
Like floating locks of Undine fall'n asleep?
Not since your death-bed has the world been worse,
And lives of men seem shrivelled by a curse.
Behold your Europe sloughs and rule of right,
And like an idiot lonely in the night
Of Aztec canyons knows no other law
Than the snake's rattle and the Jaguar's claw.
Behold your France all honour-stripped and bare
And Alcuin's England as the jackal's lare!
Where are you sleeping, Emperor Charlemagne?
When shall your soul set earth alight again?

Our world first yeaned, and life was borne,
Long ages after she was torn
Out of sun's flank, a crimson spark,
To fade into the seamless dark.
When earth conceived in greenish slime,
Then life from filth began to climb
Informed in plants like creeping things
With tentacles and poisoned stings,
Weird cactus-growths and leprous blooms
On waters dungeoned in the glooms
Of granite pass and mountain side,
That still eternal darkness hide.
The flying lizards emerald-green
Congested all the sky with sheen
And rapid wings, whose metal clang
Shook sky and earth till echoes rang.
Then lumpish mammals went their way
To death, each one his kindred's prey,
On continents that now lie stark
In cold waves like a deep-drowned ark.

[1] Written in September, 1938.

No reign of law had our world then
For law came to the earth with men.

Our breed appeared in starveling groups;
A mother here, a father there,
Each with a litter, shaggy troops,
Who flayed the elk, entrapped the hare
Or stripped date-palm and bramble bare
To fill flat bellies; till some more
In luck than most came to the shore,
Where Nile had spread his red brown flood,
That Nubian clay had shot with blood.
They saw the red infused with green,
Where reedy dross and seeds had been
Flung cataract to cataract
By white-toothed waves that never slacked
Their hurry to the Middle Sea.
They soon beheld the land set free
From watery garrisons retired
And in their natal ditch embyred;
And kernels that in swampy bed
Had but a while ago seemed dead,
Began to put forth root, then leaf
Then seed that fell with autumn's grief
To lie all lifeless in the mud
And wait the hap of next year's flood.
Thus learned our forebears, man and wife,
The working of the wheel of life,
By tillage forçed to settlement
That in its web soon had them pent,
With kingship, governance and law,
But shielded from the tiger's maw.

Kingdoms arose, with cities soon,
White-walled, and gleaming like the moon,
Around the ocean's puckered blue
Upon whose steeps the galleons flew.
Like meteors in barbarian night
They bent their way through dark and light
To founding of new civil steads
In secret coves and river beds,
Hymning the Mother of the gods,

Whose son made war with all the odds
Of evil tipped against his life,
Yet rose triumphant from the strife;
While incense borne from sacrifice
Hid every gate in Paradise.
Egypt's twin realms, Shinar, and Crete
Held all men's tribute at their feet.
Three sister lands by kindly law
Bound all the charted world in awe,
In days when fear of Amraphel,
Minos, and Menes, reached to hell;
Till Egypt by the Greek was yoked,
And Babel's waterways were choked,
And Candia's mazy citadel
Became a wreck where owls might dwell,
To dwindle through the legend past
By time and rubble overcast,
A footstool to the anarch's reign,
When Dorian night the sun had slain.

At last the Mother of the gods,
Who once ruled Dicte's crags and clods,
Looked on our earth with pitying eyes,
Then slipped her flounces from her thighs,
And, kiton-clad and with aegis armed,
Came down to where the Dorians farmed
In cruelty, despair, and pain,
Intent that law should rule again.
She taught their tribe her Cretan lore,
And now saw Athens' temple soar
Towards the cloud o'er that red rock
Skirted with flag and ladysmock.
There in her house against the sky
She heard the ages flocking by,
Like England's swallows Nileward bent
For minaret and bedouin tent.
She watched the human tidal go
An aimless pageant to and fro.
They stayed untaught and she unthanked.
When off to tribal war they clanked,
She, wounded by the Grecian spite,
Fled westward like the golden light
Before eve's starry upthrust bright.

Hail Rome! The Mother of Mankind
Arose with all her legions lined
To claim our world for law and peace,
From Colchis of the golden fleece
To where Silura's vistas spill
Cascades of palm and daffodil
Into a tide like bluebells seen
At eve beyond some woody green.
She knew no lie of blood and soil
That human unity should foil,
But welcomed all into her home.
Like leaves that form a single tome,
All men were bound in brotherhood.
The charcoal-burners in Speen wood,
The ruddy kings of Thames and Trent,
The Lybian in his dusty tent,
The Spaniard, tending field and flock,
By hills like monstrous waves of rock,
The Gaul against whose central keep
Barbarians break then backward sweep,
Those marginal men with eyes aslant,
And coal-black lords of Garamant,
Those bramble-fruit of humankind,
Were in one family combined.
The Mother of the Gods looked down
On taut white road and clustered town
Where caravans went in and out
With chariot roll, and muleteer's shout
Huckstering their wares along the way,
Dried apricots from dim Cathay
With silk and godkins cut from jade,
To where Atlantic waves were stayed.
She saw fair triremes take to sea
Swifter than whippets newly free,
Or egrets fleeing from the hunt,
From England down to sun-bit Punt.
On daisied fields and mountains cloaked
With ice, ten thousands altars smoked
To glorify god, nymph, or elf,
Petty avatars of herself;
And as she watched the human brood
She loved our world, for life was good.

Rome failed. The City of Mankind
Was stricken. Lightning, storm, and wind
Assailed her towers, oppressed with cloud
Grown crimson like a martyr's shroud
And tapestried with dancing fire,
That changed the moat to hell's empire,
While Hun and Goth swarmed through the night,
With helmets horned and glistering white,
A roaring torrent that the plain
Of Asia spewed towards the main,
Wave after wave with shout on shout,
Destructive as a waterspout,
That takes a galleon like a crock
Then breaks it with an earthquake-shock.
Their tents were pitched, appearing soon
Like cones of ice beneath the moon,
Where men and mounts being called to halt
Whetted their mettle for assault,
With rein and breath indrawn a while
And tense in each pavillioned aisle;
As skulking cyclones generate
Destruction while they seawards wait
Where coral barriers pierce the tide
Like sunset drowned and petrified.
Anon the human whirlwind roared
Towards the moat soon red and floored
With dead men and their wounded kin
Whose screams were mangled by the din
Of arrows flocking to their prey
And boulders on their murderous way
From catapult to parapet,
Where those besieged besiegers met
With violence on violence.
The tumult and the night grew dense
As scaling ladders rose or fell
Through darkness steeper than a well,
Unbroken save where cresset fires
Glowed like large garnets set in tiars
Of Whitby jet. The onslaught still
Was pressed despite the iron-clad will
Of those within. The watch towers rocked.
Foundations quaked as though shell-shocked,

When battering rams upon the gate
Struck like some heavenly clock of fate,
Telling creation as it boomed
Of earth's brief dole of life consumed.
The City of Mankind seemed doomed.

But no! For Gaul's most vital vine,
The Ferrioli's purple line,
Fruited with help for humankind
Where Flemish with Romance combined.
From them the Roman eagles learned.
The trick of phoenix when he burned;
And now the Emperor Charlemagne
Turned darkness on itself again.
His banner soared above the keep
Breaking the dark with crimson sweep;
And clouds thus cleft revealed the sun
Whose brightness pierced their byways dun,
To show on tower and barbican
Gaul, Frank, Burgundian, Alleman,
The convert Moor, and Roman squire,
Like effigies pricked out in fire,
Attentive to the world's defence
And barbarism's impotence.
Now sounded sally and foray,
Revellies[1] for a fairer day
That chased barbarian dark away.
Then in the charge the Emperor's cloak
Streamed like a web of purple smoke,
The woof being shot with silver thread
That pictured many holy dead.
His shield glowed like a full-faced moon
Incised in gold with Christian rune
For our defence, our foes to fright,
Reflecting Rhineland's sunrise bright,
Before his human hurricane,
That hurled them far from our domain
With force of law from sea to sea
Back to fantastic Germany.

[1] It is high time somebody restored the power of assimilating foreign words to our language. So the anglicised spelling "revelly" must stand. To write "reveille" is almost as bad as writing "Beauchamp's Pills—worth a guinea a box!"

Valhalla's maniac garrison
Gazed from sky-founded towers upon
Our champion in his victory.
Then through heav'n's domed immensity,
Where planets hid in noontide blue,
From cloud to cloud alarums flew
To Odin,[1] king, and lord of lies,
Throned in his brutal paradise,
Where perverts, louts, and buccaneers
Swilled brain away in maudlin tears,
Then vomited into the laps
Of Valkyries with naked paps,
Or paired together on the floor
As in their sties do sow and boar.
Then Odin of the bloody mind
Gave out that battlements be lined
With troops; while some hauled up the bridge
That linked the castle to a ridge
Of hardened cloud, whence roads to earth
In fire of sunset had their birth.
Between our world and elder stars
The roar of arms and flying cars
Shattered ethereal stillness, when
Old Odin's allies, gods and men,
Ghouls, goblins, furies snaky-haired,
And angels who with mortals paired
Before Sumeria knew the flood,
Adepts in ill and sealed in blood,
Swarmed to Valhalla there to wait
Lest Charlemagne should storm the gate.

Are you still with the mortals, Charlemagne,
Sleeping beneath some lichened counterpane
Caverned like Emperor Red-Beard in his cell?
Or did the rains your mortal part dispel
To be drawn up by daisies from the clay,
While the essential self fled far away
From us and all our flickering clique of suns?
Or was all ended like a flame that runs
To fuel shortage? If you still hold power

[1] We shall never get peace in Europe until somebody "debunks" Norse mythology. Parson Kingsley's old pal "the golden-haired Viking hero" was really a thief, a cheat, and the most bloody-minded of murderers.

Pray for the world in this night-ridden hour,
That we may save the City of Mankind;
Or better still take flesh with legions lined
Battalion on battalion, them to lead
From those blue thoroughfares where storm clouds breed.
But no, the book of wonder-work is closed,
And saints have joined the gods that were deposed,
Or so it seems; and we are left alone,
Maybe because we now are fully grown
Out of the age of legend, here to fight
Our primal battle in the cause of light,
As you fought when you re-created Rome.
Yet if you live, remembering this home
Of your soul's childhood, and possess the will
To move those universal powers, that still
Prime suns and fire flies with their destined force,
One little finger's breadth out of their course,
Exert it now, lest later be too late.
Our cause and foes are yours; our love and hate
We share with you, and pray for Rome restored
And law that shall bind all men in accord.
Meanwhile the pendulum of conflict swings
For and against us, who know nothing brings
The purgatorial upthrust of the race
Through time to triumph till the Roman mace
Knocks at Valhalla's gateway, bidding those
Within surrender or take blows for blows;
For none may grow in charity or right
Or happiness, until Valhalla's height
Be levelled by the children of the light. WALTER BURTON.

A member of The Poetry Society has suggested that an appeal should be made for the relief of the eminent poet and dramatist, Maurice Maeterlinck, who is reported to be penniless in New York. We have not been able to obtain any confirmation of this report, on which it would not be discreet to take action. It is not likely that M. Maeterlinck, who may have lost his landed property but whose resources in the first instance were not based on immovable real estate, has been reduced to penury by recent disasters. On the contrary, we understood that he was planning to live on the proceeds of his new film and play which he recently completed. In any case if he is indigent in New York it is a matter to which the attention of his admirers in the United States should be drawn; if money were collected on this side it is doubtful whether permission could be obtained to remit it.

TO MY SON

(*Born at the Armistice* 1918)

I GAVE you life from out the womb of war,
And thought to crown that gift with joy new borne
On unfledged wings of slow, reluctant peace.

I gave you life, sealed with betrayal's kiss,
Pressed on your brow a crown of twisted thorns
Sharp as the barbed illusions of the years.
I gave you life and nailed you to a cross
Without Gethsemane's redeeming choice.

Quenched is the flame that leapt within your soul,
Shadowed the morning glory of your eyes ;
The tense, sweet hope of youth sunk to grey death.

On the world's altar lies your sacrifice,
And in some far-off dawn a crumbling cross
And blossom-jewelled thorn shall crown your gift.
My sword-pierced heart shall hold the healing joy—
I gave you life.

MARY ENGLISH.

THE MOUNTAIN

YOU pointed, from where we wandered in that sweet country,
And I saw it, far off, gaunt, lonely, forbidding,
I, no mountain lover ;
I looked, and hid my face for a moment on your breast,
Clinging for fear.
But now, I must venture alone,
Up from this place grown desolate, grown weary,
Joy quenched like a blown-out candle.
I see it again with the flat pale light of the mind,
Cold and still and lonely.
I have no strength save love ; no guide.
I can taste the chill air blowing from the wastes, feel the dank fingers of the clouds ;
They break, and smoke away on the wind, and form again.
Now and now the Peak shines for a moment,
Mighty, lonelier than death, colder than outer darkness.
The loose, streaming winds are about me, and I hear the whisper of snow ;
In soft flurries it comes ; it blinds and chokes ;

My fingers slip on the frozen holds.
Clouds part at my feet, and I look into the spinning void,
The beckoning, the beckoning of the gulf.
I close my eyes and cling, sick and trembling,
Powerless to go back or forward.
In an age the Thing is hidden again, and I grope on,
On and up,
To where the Peak hangs against the sky.
If I reach it, there will come no thrill of pride,
Only great weariness of a far journey;
I shall dare not to look down, about me.
But if your presence is there, my strong one, my love,
Time shall not daunt me, nor space, nor loneliness, nor pain, nor cold,
nor weariness;
I the fearful, the faltering, shall dwell steadfast,
Bound close in your spirit forever.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

Professor G. Wilson-Knight's vivid dramatic impersonations of Shakespearian characters with an equally vivid intense commentary on Shakespeare's message for to-day was remarkably realistic and inspired erudition, which gripped the audiences at two Friday matinées in August. Dr. F. S. Boas who presided on the first congratulated his friendly rival in Shakespearian studies on his earnest interpretation of a poet whom he knew so thoroughly and who camè more and more to the forefront of life's battle as his genius was more understood as one who wrote not only for his own time but for our time and for a future time. As Prof. Wilson-Knight pointed out, Shakespeare was still in advance of ourselves and was the poet of the future. Mr. Edward Ellul, who presided on the second occasion as an admirer of Prof. Wilson-Knight's books and who himself has a penetrating recognition of the affinities of English and French poetry and of Shakespeare's universal and futuristic significance, expressed admiration of the Professor's organization and co-ordination of his recitals.

At the eminently successful July matinées arranged by Miss Audrey Russell £15 15s. 10d. was collected for the Red Cross. The collections at the matineés for THE POETRY SOCIETY expenses are not so satisfactory, and generally include a contemptuous farthing; the donor however persists in attending the matinées—evidently the coin contributed does not represent her opinion of them.

Marie Tello Phillips, Vice-President of The Poetry Society, and founder of groups in several cities, including the Miami Branch, was the honour guest and read from her several books of poetry at the Annual Poetry Dinner of the Pittsburgh Group, a hundred members, on May 23rd, in the College Club of Pittsburgh, Pa.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXXXVI

No Final Breath, by Grace Buchanan Sherwood (The Wings Press, New York) is a fifth collection by this poet. Readers and critics comment upon the unfailing regard for the technical requirements of good poetry to be found in her writings. She says: "How I wish something could be done to convince the average person that poetry is not a thing to be reverenced but carefully avoided."

There are a number of sonnet sequences in the volume and we quote the following lyric: "Even A Beggar Must Be Glad"—

Even a beggar must be glad,
Breathing this aromatic air;
Dun coloured rags that once were sad
Must sing aloud the sun they wear.

I think there is no sable shawl
That will not flutter out and blow
On this sweet breeze; where sunbeams fall
Grief ebbs and tears forget to flow.

Let every man who sees this light,
Who breathes this crisply fruited air,
Now render thanks for pure delight,
Bestowed for all alike to share.

Sister Miriam, author of *Woven of the Sky* (Macmillan & Co., New York), writes:

> "I think so many things about poetry that I do not know where or how to start telling you of them. If I wrote you a month from now, I'd probably have different or new ideas on the subject."

She continues with a quotation from Mr. T. S. Eliot: "We should distinguish between the work of authors which is the product of a special religious awareness, and that which with this, includes a general awareness," and adds "Though my own verse, is said by critics to have come from 'a deep mood of mysticism,' it is really the outcome of life, not purely religious life except insofar as both, in a nun's life, are one and the same."

Sister Miriam queries: "Is poetry entirely dependent on images? Is there no other justifiable poetry?"

In her title-poem she says:

. . . This tent that is the thought of You is wide
And high as heaven is high, yet fearlessly
I wander up and down, alone, inside
This canvas woven of the sky for me.

When I emerge into the alien air
With quiet hands and still more quiet eyes,

The chariot of the stars is waiting there
To bear me on, by love made strong and wise:
So strong that now at last I can be brave;
So wise, all briefer loves must find a grave.

In *The Shrine of Beauty and Other Poems* (Chapman & Grimes, Boston, Mass.) are re-published Mary Hurd's poetry with additional poems. Miss Hurd's untimely death in 1937 was mourned by many, especially by those who had known her as the Minister of the East Sangerville Union Church and the East Dover Community Church in Maine. Many were her activities and her devotion to the cause of Peace was well known and is clearly revealed in her poetry. We read with admiration "Agnosco":

I do not know the arguments men use
To prove that Death has not a perfect power.
I only know that after suns and dews
What was a cold brown bulb becomes a flower.

I am not certain that when Jesus died
He hoped to win mankind to brotherhood.
I only know that on the Andes' side
His figure stands where once bronze cannon stood.

I am not sure at all that there exists
In some far heaven a God who aids the weak,
I only know that when the morning mists
Have lifted, I can see the mountain peak.
I am quite unconvinced that in all things
There is a Love which guides both great and small.
I only know that birds first use their wings
When they have learned they need not fear to fall.

With a dramatist's power, Miss Hurd writes "Points Of View":

Mary lay in a cattle-stall
Filled with fragrant hay.
The folk of Bethlehem one and all
Came to see the Babe so small
That in her white arms lay.
They cried, "He is born of a royal line."
But Mary said only, "He is mine."
Mary stood by a Cross raised high
On Calvary's bleak hill,
While priests and soldiers and passers-by
Jeered at One about to die
Who gazed upon her still.

They mocked, " An imposter whose day is done."
But Mary whispered, " He is my son."

Esther Valck Georgns, author of *Snow at Night* (Bruce, Humphries, New York), tells us that she does not think poetry plays nearly large enough a part in most people's lives. " The average person is so afraid of it and yet if he is lured into contact with it he loves it; witness, for instance, the way they crowded the aisles to hear Shakespeare last winter." An impressive short expression of this poet's is " Lift Up Thine Eyes,"—

Staunch stand the towering purple hills,
Dark fragments of Eternity,
Still shall they stand when human ills
And human joys have ceased to be.

Piled spume of olden glacier tides,
Tall rubbish heaps of sand and stone,
Where nought of soul or sense abides,
Nor frail impermanence of bone.

In modern nomenclature runs the word escapist. We find Miss Georgns deals with this unhappy one, definitely, in " To An Escapist ":

Ah, cherish your breath for laughing,
And save your breath for sighs,
For flight will never free you,
Though it end beyond the skies.

Run to the outposts of morning,
Hide in the night of the sea,
Still will your fetters bind you,
Still you shall never be free.

Find you the heart of a forest,
Climb to the eagle's bleak shelf,
And learn that freedom is only
For him who has lost himself.

Deep Waters by J. P. Gimenez (Padilla Printing Works, San Juan, Porto Rico), comes to us from the Virgin Islands, the work of a poet who is internationally known. Written in the English language, the songs he has published have not only reached the hearts of the English-speaking world, but his poetry which is written in Spanish and West Indian dialect have also made him many friends and admirers throughout the West Indies and Latin America. Mr. Gimenez writes me:

" You would like to know just why I write poetry and, strange as it may seem, that is exactly just what I have been wanting to know all along. The eternal question with me, and the one to

which I have never been able to find a reply is: How can I stop writing? As to just what part poetry plays in the modern life of to-day, I must say that, to me, it would seem that poetry not only lifts the soul above the petty and meaningless things of material life, but actually creates for the spirit a calm and receptive state which felicitates its communion with God."

Mrs. Winthrop Bushnell Palmer, author of *Flight Without Fear* (The Overbrook Press, Stamford, Conn.), sends us the following: "I write poetry because I love life and people. It is not possible to tell the truth about life and people except in song. The truth is a shy thing and frightened of prose which deals in reasons which are usually the contradiction of the truth—for the sake of public welfare. I respect public welfare but I am in love with the truth—and so I write poetry."

Out of My Heart, Maude Clark Hough's first book (House of Field, New York) acquaints us with a writer whose response to the beauty of nature, the joy of love and sympathy in sorrow is clearly defined with the poet's appreciation. A member of some sixteen clubs, her contacts are numerous and effective.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

HER PART

CALMLY the flute player listened,
While the brasses fought and threatened.
Attentive, she waited, head bent,
Her hands on the instrument, passive.
The frenzy spent, she knew
And serenely claimed her moment.
So bright, so pale, her face!
The pipe, so pale, so bright!
Light the touch of her music,
But the silence grew breathless, tense,
As though each one, incredulous,
Met there his own soul, singing.
Each one, taut, absorbed,
In the stillness rebuilding a life!
Then again the strife, the storm!
Bending her head, unresistant,
Deeply attentive, she waited.

New York. ADELAIDE RICHARDSON.

THE STUFFED AND THE TRUE

I FIND ten good poems in the *Cambridge University Press* anthology, *Fear No Man* (3s. 6d.). They are "The Unborn Historian," "St. Christopher," "Haunted," "Godstow," "The Wild Swan," "The Friends," "Secret Service," "The Soldiers at the Tax-Gathering," "Dikkebusch" and "Rock Pilgrim." The remainder of the book may best be summed up in Mr. Grigson's words "So far, so trite." One contributor ambles on about "the silent moon," another feels apples in his flesh, a third stretches Flecker's "Golden Journey" on the rack to produce a tortuous "Story of Pilgrimage," a fourth has visions about angels, a fifth falls in love with a raven and is grieved because the affair has from physical necessity to be platonic, a sixth goes slowly mad staring at a candle, a seventh is apparently a necrophile—he spends an agreeable evening with "a late-lamented corpse."

All these writers are like the author of "Firm Ground." They are content to watch "cool time run by" and make the poet's part in public life that of the village idiot. The contributor of "Essence" gives as his excuse:

> "Thoughts that go through my mind,
> I dare not tell them."

Other poets *do* dare, and these are the poets I prefer to read. The key to the volume is perhaps provided by "Barrel Organ" with:

> "Nobody's working and nobody's thinking to-day."

An urgent plea comes from "Song of Man":

> "I am as a stone, lonely,
> Unbefriending.
> Pity me, pity me."

I do sincerely.

Really this stuff will not do. Such poems should have been bundled up with the drearie-wearies and the whoopee girls and dropped overboard long ago. They are about as useful to the intellectual public as army food would be to a gourmand. The contributors were wise to remain anonymous. To quote from "On Pisgah":

> "Come, let us get us a captain,
> that shall lead us back to Egypt! Is God too hard?
> is Life beyond you? and is all hope perished?

C. H. Williamson's anthology *Diversions* (O.U.P.) is in a better, firmer tradition altogether. Selecting examples of poetry and prose from the whole range of English Literature he explains his choice as containing "little on the subject of war, but something, it may be, about scenes and amusements familiar to those who serve and those who wait."

Diversions is a book not to read merely but to know as a friend, to dip into at tea-time after a walk, or while sitting in the corner nook of a village inn—a book to be propped open against the coffee pot as spring sunshine streams over the breakfast table. As refreshing as Pepys'

diary, and as full of beautiful things as "The Golden Treasury," this book is totally unlike any other anthology. It is wiser and nicer. Classical and at the same time individual in taste it contains those things which are as fine and enduring to the imagination as the sweep of Regent Street, a cottage overlooking the river, or a crowd cheering the home football team to victory.

To the rich country that no war may devastate nor peace spoil *Diversions* is a guide. One may go to the theatre with Thomas Dekker and see the Gull "mew at passionate speeches; blare at merry; find fault with the music; whew at the children's action, whistle at the songs," or one may wonder at the Bee-Boy of Gilbert White who sucked the bodies of bees for the sake of their honey bags and who as he ran about "used to make a humming noise with his lips, resembling the buzzing of bees." Here—to make a quiet selection at random—are Gaston de Foix on "Hunting," Isaac Walton and songs at the Ale-house after fishing, Nathaniel Wanley on "The Advantages of Sinning Early," Oliver Goldsmith's "Cart Race," Edmund Waller's lines to "The Wisdom of Age," William Gilpin on "New Forest Pigs," Fielding's description of Partridge at a performance of *Hamlet*, Sir Edmund Chambers on Shakespeare, Thomas Chaloner describing "A Regicide's Jest," Ruth Pitter's "Rare Birds," Smollett and "A Duel by Smoking" and Horace Walpole on "The Good Manners of Highwaymen." And here are the facts from Shakespeare, Dryden and Donne to Blunden, de la Mare and Dorothy Wellesley, some famous names, others almost unknown, all as Sidney described them with "the well inchanting skill of music . . . with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner."

Diversions provides the complete answer to books like *Fear No More* The explanation of the latter is perhaps to be found in the 1914 letter of Sir Walter Raleigh quoted by the former. "Can't someone bottle the authors? I have just had a loathsome letter from Hall-Caine, about a literary album, all gush and rant, to be given to the King of the Belgians. So I said—'Dear Sir, the best present to give to the King of the Belgians is Belgium. Two of the men of this household are at the front and the third is drilling, Yours truly.' But nothing will prevent authors and fussers butting in. They feel they don't matter and they can't bear it. They're like the men of the Basque nation, who take to their beds and receive congratulations when their wives have a child." The true authors of to-day are engaged either in fighting fascism or in fighting war—not necessarily physically. The fussers are left to contribute to "loathsome" anthologies.

JOHN WALLER.

We had hoped to find that *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley* (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.) would be invaluable to young writers—the wisdom of the master for the benefit of ambitious

earnest neophytes. Actually the letters are pleasant exchanges between two mutual admirers and discuss many things, such as horoscopes and dreams and more intimate matters, in addition to poems sent to and fro for criticism and emendation, from which Yeats himself was not averse. The letters throw more light on the compilation of *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* and on the reference in the preface to Lady Gerald as well as the inclusion of the preponderating number of her poems. Apropos W.B. admits " I can praise a work of criticism, a work of philosophy, with intelligence, but not a poem. When I come to write of poetry I seem—I suppose because it is all instinct with me—completely ignorant." Perhaps those intimate letters would have been more valuable and pregnant if they had been more severely edited. Lady Gerald preserves such a p.s. as, " I hear that the King's Gold Medal for poetry has been given to Laurence Whistler. Why ? ", and she records that Yeats liked this story, " Maurice Hewlett said to Sidney Colvin at a party, ' Who is that ass at the other end of the room ? ' Sidney Colvin replied with majesty, ' That is Stephen Phillips. We are all agreed that the genius of Shakespeare, the power of Michelangelo and the tenderness of Raphael are united in that one noble brow.' " But perhaps we should be grateful for occasional critical frankness and penetrating opinion. W.B. assures Lady Gerald that " You have the best language among us because you most completely follow Aristotle's advice and write ' like the common people.' You have the animation of spoken words and spoken syntax. The worst language is Elliot's (*sic*) in all his early poems—a level flatness of rhythm." Yeats is very downright in a later paragraph " My Anthology continues to sell and the critics get more and more angry. When I excluded Wilfred Owen, whom I consider unworthy of the poet's corner of a country newspaper, I did not know I was excluding a revered sandwich-board man of the revolution and that somebody has put his worst and most famous poem in a glass-case in the British Museum—however if I had known it I would have excluded him just the same. He is all blood, dirt and sucked sugar stick (look at the selection in Faber's Anthology—he calls poets ' bards,' a girl a ' maid ' and talks about ' Titanic wars '). There is every excuse for him but none for those who like him." W.B. frequently goes into verbal details as in this characteristic sentence, " I like ' The Shell,' it is charming, and profound and full of good words,—eyebright, Pangloss, formality, copulate " ; and when he tells his correspondent " Do not try to write verse. You are young as poets count age and will be better for meditation and rest. Rest is a great instructor, for it brings the soul back to itself. We sink down into our own soil and take root again." Lady Gerald contributes some illuminating comments, pointing out how strongly " Yeats disliked flowers, and how his lack of observation concerning natural beauty was almost an active obsession, and how it does in my opinion dim most poems of his concerned with Nature. . . . Sex, Philosophy, and the Occult preoccupy him. He

strangely intermingles the three. The old masters, the dead accepted poets about which I much desire his opinion, appear to weary him. He seems to have passed through these, and out beyond." The real inwardness of the old poet's personal admissions, his opinions and mentality can only be understood and traced back to their origins by such a profound student of his personality and development as Mr. Hunt Grubb who has dealt very thoroughly in THE POETRY REVIEW with the various manifestations, aberration and genius of his singular friend, who, Lady Gerald supposes, never knew a day of vigorous health or physical vitality during his long life. He once said to me 'I have never had any physical energy.' Although he did not die of consumption, he joins the large company of men and women of genius who actually suffered from tuberculosis, or had some tendency towards it. The symptoms are unmistakeable to anyone who has once had it. The feverish cerebral excitement, often the bodily excitement, the sudden rise of vitality, the sudden fall, the flame, the burnt up, the consumed."

Resurgam is the bold, defiant, hopeful title of a new series of broadsheets (1s). initiated by Peter Baker, now a Cadet at Catterick. At the moment we can only welcome this brave venture, leaving a review of the earlier numbers until later, the first (now ready) consisting of twenty-one poems written under the impact of war by the enthusiastic editor himself, to be followed by poems by Patricia Ledward and other younger poets of the 1910 if not actually 1920 class—a notable service for, as the preface asserts, " There must be a platform for those of our younger poets who have something new, something significant, to say, or who repeat the old truths in a new and significant way; a platform from which these poets, whatever their school or creed, can give their message to the world."

This series should help in consolidating the new era that will arise phoenix-like from the ashes of this devastating war, if these young people can maintain their noble purpose: " to bring comfort in adversity, and content in time of triumph, to preserve our literary inheritance, our cultural heritage, and to hand it on, not impaired, but strengthened, to the future."

We ought to have called attention earlier to the handsome quarto quarterly, *Kingdom Come*, the magazine of wartime Oxford, edited by John Waller and three colleagues, to which the Oxford poets recently surveyed in THE POETRY REVIEW by Mr. Waller, are major contributors, with such established predecessors as Christopher Hassell, Frederick Prokosch, Ruth Pitter, Terence Heywood, C. Day Lewis, and Charles Madge, relieved by a quantum of brilliant prose, which, like the verse, never lacks lucidity but sometimes might gain in pertinency.

The old myths, legends, and ballad themes leap into virile life under the pen of Hugh McCrae. He is not afraid to write his *Poems* (Angus and Robertson, 6s.) in the old forms and even sometimes with traces of the old language, but he approaches his subjects with the vigour and concision that the accelerated living of to-day demands. Nor is he insensitive to his own environment and times, enriching them with the sensuous imagery of the past. "Lament" is a strange and haunting poem:

My unicorn . . . my unicorn is dead;
He with the swift long flanks and kingly head,
The great tall spring horn . . . the yellow-eyed
Fierce-bearded husband of the forest side.

The moon of love creeps through our trysting-tree,
(O, may it never shine again on me!)
The pears and barley that I stole to-night
Fill the slow wind with odorous delight.

My unicorn . . . my unicorn is dead;
These rocks will ne'er re-echo to his tread . . .
No more he'll crush me in his passion's drouth,
Nor crop the wildings from my warm wet mouth.

He was so strong, so battailous and proud,
The leopard trembled when his challenge loud
Pealed down the cliff and shook the satyr's caves,
High on Oreema o'er the river waves.

My unicorn . . . my unicorn is dead;
The women of the wood will make his bed,
And weep . . . for he was monarch over them. . . .
While I burn rue and sing his requiem.

O, never more I'll hear him call to me,
Or spy his peak come travelling o'er the sea,
Swift as a kestrel on its tented wings,
Between the conches of the Triton kings.

My unicorn . . . my unicorn is dead.

A book of verse by Mary Gilmore, *Battlefields* (5s.) from the same publisher, has the name of Hugh McCrae in the dedication, and he in turn wrote a whimsical poem in Scots to her in his own book. Dame Mary, for all that many of her themes are tender and womanly, has yet a masculine touch in her writing and a man's power of reasoning as well as a woman's intuition. "Tradition lies with deeds, not words,"

she says, and finds Marathon repeated in Suvla Bay and the torch of achievement handed from hero to hero of Australian development. She can handle a Coronation Anthem with dignity and write of the fauna of her country in epic manner, as in " The Birds," or in lyric fashion, as in the following :

I saw the beauty go,
The beauty that, in a stream,
Flowed through the breadth of the land
Like the fenceless foot of a dream.

There went the kangaroos, that, in hosts,
For their bedding-down grouped at even,
Only the sound of the nibbling lips
Making the sunset steven.

Then as they stilled, and the moon
With her white cloths mantled the trees,
From the shadows beneath the mopoke called,
And the curlew made her pleas.

I saw the beauty go,
The beauty that could not be tamed ;
But before it went it looked at me
With the eyes of the maimed.

The Rev. H. G. Blackburne, M.A., though writing now from an English vicarage, was sometime also " down under." *The Coming of the King* (Mowbray's, 9d.), though mainly composed of hymns and religious verse, contains also poems of affectionate recollection of New Zealand. The religious poems, conventional in theme and treatment, show the writer to be full of a sincere and warm-blooded faith, the truths and consolations of which he endeavours to share with his readers in a fervent desire to help their spiritual growth.

Another privately printed small, too small, volume of verse, *In the Midst of Death* by Clive Sansom is obtainable from Paul Scott, " Wyphurst," High Street, Southgate, N.14 (1s. 9d.). The very fact that the O.U.P. has sponsored the printing is an earnest of the book's good quality. Mr. Sansom can etch a scene or a mood with delicate precision, fusing the two as only the poet can. The most significant poem in the book, and one whose sinister apprehensions many can share, is " September Holiday," written in 1939 :

All Nature's agents image war to me,
Even the butterfly above the ditch
Flutters with sinister intent ; a bee
Heavy with honey, drones at bomber's pitch.
The distant tractor furrows for attack
Trenches meticulous as a general's plan.

Those corn-shocks rest like rifles in a stack ;
That sheaf ungathered is a fallen man. . . .
Nothing is simple now, nothing immune
From war's contagion, time's conspiracy.
Throughout the sunny Cotswold afternoon
All Nature's agents image death to me.

The Spenserian stanzas of *The River* by Julia Reeve Wood (Muller 3s. 6d.) flow coolly, musically and unhurriedly, in exact attunement to their subject. Gradually as man appears on the scene the quiet philosophy sharpens and draws towards a conclusion with :

Though much is lost in timeless age that's gone,
Man's early dust, blown on the wind of chance,
Stays piled may-be in Rome or Babylon ;
In Grecian frieze doth an idea enhance ;
Sleeps on awhile in chiselled elegance
Of high Ellora's rock ; or in a tomb
At Abydos makes history held in trance.
For each is part of all and in the loom
Of life inwoven stays, nor meets a final doom.

And with this thought I watch the river go,
How whilst it stays it may no moment bide ;
But on unending, constant in its flow,
Must always run, must always glint and glide,
On, on, till bourne be reached of ocean wide.
And thus the stream of life as endlessly,
By many a wayward course will meet one Tide,
Where all its parts, renewed continuously,
"Turn to themselves again" that they once more may be...

E. D. Bangay.

Italian Nationalism and English Letters, by Harry W. Rudman (Allen and Unwin 18s.), is ironical reading now, telling as it does with a wealth of detail and a still greater wealth of notes and bibliography of the personal contacts with England of Mazzini and other Italian exiles including the poets Foscolo and Rossetti, followed by the active associations of Garibaldi with English literary personages including Tennyson and Swinburne proving that unification of Italy was as Byron said "the very poetry of politics." The great English poets of the century, writing fervently on Italy and freedom, established that good will which now seems to have been destroyed, but which laid the foundations of the Rome of Mussolini's ambitions, are founded on Anglo-Saxon admiration for Mazzini's prophecy of a refulgent new Italy, the culmination of Dante's vision.

The Pattern of Freedom is woven very positively and assuredly in the

verse and prose selected by Sir Bruce L. Richmond (Faber, 7s. 6d.), a moving and inspiring tapestry bearing witness to the true aims of civilised man, deeply rooted in the eternal verities which Nazis domination and oppression cannot destroy.

The autumn plans of the publisher so far as poetry is concerned seem to remain uncertain, but (as might have been expected), Messrs. Faber & Faber are able to announce quite definitely a number of interesting new volumes, the first to be ready (on September 12th) being T. S. Elliot's *East Coker*, followed by *Gathering Storm* by William Empson on the 19th. During October and November they will publish additional Sesame books, including: *The Trumpet and Other Poems* by Edward Thomas, *No More Ghosts* by Robert Graves, *Poems Old and New* by Edith Sitwell, *Thirty-Four Poems* by Herbert Read, *Poems New Selected* by Siegfried Sassoon, *Poems* by Ezra Pound, and *Poems* by Roy Campbell.

Messrs. Martin Secker & Warburg intend to publish this month Rayner Heppenstall's *Blind Men's Flowers Are Green*. They also state that *The Poet and Society* by Philip Henderson is still selling.

Prof. Thomas Bodkin, of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham University, will preside at a reading (with comments) by Dr. D. S. MacColl from his recently published *Poems* at The Poetry Society's weekly matinée at 33 Portman Square, on Friday, September 6th. On the following Friday Captain Harold Goad, for many years Director of The British Institute in Florence, and organizer for the British Council of other similar institutes in Italy, will draw on his unique experiences for a talk on "English Poetry in Italy." Lord Rennell of Rodd will preside. Admission to these weekly readings and lectures is free to anyone who cares to attend. A further distinctive series is in preparation. On September 20th Miss Rosemary Minnis will read Poems of Empire, with Sir Harry Lindsay, K.C.I.E., in the chair. On September 27th, Miss Julia Richmond will present a programme "Of Honour and Beauty" with Mr. Adrian Bury, the poet and painter, in the chair, and on the following Friday Miss Marjorie Gullan and Mr. Clive Sansom will read from their anthology, *The Poet Speaks*. On October 11th the first of a monthly series of "Youth Renascent" readings, intended to prove that there is a younger generation writing poetry, will introduce poems by Peter Baker and Patricia Ledward, and on October 18th and 25th Miss Roberta Shuttleworth, assisted by Misses Rene Cohen, June Gregory, Pamela Blofeld and Angela Lake, will present poems depicting "The Country Scene" and from THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day*.

Contributors who have been asked to subscribe or contribute to a periodical called the *Poetry Quarterly*, or to any other similar publication, are requested to inform the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

SYMBOLISM *VERSUS* REALISM

THE AESTHETIC OF REALITY

MR. Randolph Hughes, in his "very short rejoinder," in the July–August number of THE POETRY REVIEW, has attempted to wipe the floor with me, and seems to imagine that I am a hard-headed realist, with no higher poetic perception at all.

I am making this counter-rejoinder because it seems that the issues are great; in fact that the very principles of poetry are at stake. It is a question upon which it would be good to know the opinions and heart-felt convictions of other members of The Poetry Society. "Symbolism" is something in our midst which we have to take into account; yes, Mr. Hughes, I admit that. Of course, it is possible to ignore it, but I think it would be good for all poetry lovers to make an assessment. It might clear the air, for the issue is bound to be joined at some time or other. We have been forced to assess the values of the current ideologies of Fascism and Communism, great movements which threaten the very basis of human life; and although the results of the invasion of Symbolism may not be so dire, it would be well to be prepared.

This is not to suggest that Symbolism is a terrible evil. I apprehend what Mr. Hughes and his Symbolist friends are aiming at. They are attempting to fly into that mystical realm above the heads of the giants, to which I referred in my former article in the May–June number of THE POETRY REVIEW; and I still think that realm is a kind of stratosphere of improbability. Mr. Hughes admits that he can do nothing to convert me and others like me to his way of thinking, and I must confess that his remarks have had no such effect.

One thing, however, I will go so far as to admit. Symbolism may be its own justification. Mr. Hughes takes me to task for applying traditional norms to something which cannot be judged by them. All right, Mr. Hughes, I will give it "a mongrel's chance"; but we are still at cross purposes. It is like the conflict of say Christianity with rationalist philosophy. There are mutual foundations, but the upper structures develop into something vastly different.

Now, I am in agreement with Mr. Hughes on the point that Symbolism is an unfortunate word to use as a title for this school of poetry. I quite follow his statement that symbolism is only one of the constituent elements of this poetry; but I do strenuously deny that the symbol is a rhetorical device of the most rudimentary kind. But of that more a little later.

For the moment I wish to promulgate this conviction—that for the expression of poetry in its "purest or most absolute state," to quote Mr. Hughes, words are an inadequate medium. It seems most certain to me that the interpretation of such a high spiritual state—in so far as it can be interpreted, or even suggested to the human soul—demands either the graphic or the aural medium. Painting might do it, as in the mystical works of William Blake, or the symbolical pictures

of G. F. Watts ; or otherwise it requires music, not so much perhaps the classical symphonies and kindred works, but rhapsodical music, which, being a musician, I can readily conceive. Words I believe are in a different category, no less beautiful, as the art of poetry is no less beautiful than the other arts. In some directions it is greater than the other arts, by very reason of the use of every-day symbolism sublimated and consecrated to the expression of the Absolute.

This brings me to the enunciation of my Aesthetic of Reality. I discussed this question to some extent in my article in the May–June 1934 number of THE POETRY REVIEW on " Intensity in Poetry." In the first place I want to soundly drub in to the mind of Mr. Hughes, and all poetry lovers, that the Reality of which I speak *is* the ultimate Reality with a capital R. Mr. Hughes says that this pronouncement is merely " the flourish of the showman trying to impress the public by the noise of his drum." Now really, Mr. Hughes. Those who know me would readily confirm that I am one of the last persons in the world to pose as a showman. Nevertheless, I do sincerely maintain that Reality is so because God made it like that.

I wrote, in the 1934 article referred to, of the innerness of words, that spiritual quality which in itself is poetry, and which is usually quite overlooked in our common use of language. The very essence of the whole of Creation is thought vibration, and the outward forms of things but the manifestation of the Idea. Therefore the intrinsic content of all matter is spiritual, mystical, and of the Absolute. Similarly, in language, whether in prose or poetry, words are innately spiritual, and emanate from that very realm of the " purest or most absolute " which is the Utopia of the Symbolists. I emphatically disagree with Mr. Hughes when he says it is desirable " to eliminate as much as possible modes of expression—all elements whatsoever—belonging to other categories, and whose proper function is quite different."

My aim is as much the highest and purest in poetry as that of Mr. Hughes or any Symbolist ; and I maintain that the aim has been very considerably achieved by the acknowledged great poets—through the medium of ordinary words, " lucidity, logic, plain statement, intellective values." Above all, the important point is this, that these modes of expression do not belong to different categories. They *are* the material of poetry, and they are actually poetry itself.

Now, there are two points here on which I must not be misunderstood. Firstly, I have admitted that Symbolism may be its own justification, and I dare say its followers find it so, to their own satisfaction. Also, having stated my view that words are an inadequate medium for the highest poetry—in the Symbolist sense—I may appear to be contradicting myself in saying that the words are the poetry. But there is no actual contradiction, for I am not arguing from the Symbolist point of view ; between me and them is a great gulf fixed.

Secondly, it must not be estimated that I want poetry to be like an essay or a philosophical treatise. I know what poetry is, and that I love it in the works of Milton, Shelley, Keats and the rest. And what about Robert Browning, Mr. Hughes? (And by the way, what a low estimate you appear to have of Byron!)

Now, although I have said that ordinary words, used lucidly, logically, and intellectually are poetry in themselves, I must now come into line with Mr. Hughes for a moment by stating very definitely that they are not the whole of poetry. In fact they are the spirit-infused material, whereas the poetic Absolute is an " over and above element." Behind all manifestations is the Idea, the Real with a capital R.

It is here that we come to the crux of the matter. Man is a human being, a trinity of body, mind, and spirit, who is nevertheless spiritual throughout, whether he recognize it or not. And he is a conscious being, with a perception of beauty, vibrant with intensity, which penetrates in large measure into the Absolute by means of, and not in spite of, the ordinary, the physical, mental and spiritual of his human-divine make-up. In poetry, therefore, man sublimates and consecrates the " forces of dream " to which Mr. Hughes would have him yield, infuses his words with the powers of the Absolute, and thus fashions artistically, intellectually and spiritually a great work of poetic beauty. Finally, this work must be logical, for the Cosmos is manifested logic, the Creator being what He is. This is surely what Coleridge meant by the " irradiation and transfiguration " of baser elements " by a higher power " in poetry of a supreme kind, which Mr. Hughes quotes.

That is just it. The poetically perceptive mind transfigures common language and raises it from purely human reality to Divine Reality. It seems that the Symbolists attempt to float away into some state which is neither of this world nor the next. The " forces of dream " become nebulous, a phantasmagoria; an opiate instead of a sure grasp; an unformulated mist, instead of the flash of the rising sun upon the mountain peak.

Man being what he is, words are wings with which he mounts to the highest realms of poesy, and I cannot think that Symbolism, with its vague aspiration of discarding the wings, can have any really important place in the art.

When we have gone beyond the symbols of body and mind, and can dispense with the symbols of words altogether, being in a purely spiritual state, then we shall apprehend the poetic Absolute, and there will be no need for Symbolism or any other " ism." We shall be in direct touch with the Source of all beauty. In the meantime, our words, used poetically are symbolic and inspirational, and not the devices of rhetoric so scornfully referred to by Mr. Hughes as being of the most rudimentary kind.

The tradition of poetry is based on scientific and spiritual facts, and the traditional giants have achieved their height because they have

recognized and used the true symbolism. They will endure till the end of time, and I think it is safe to say that Shakespeare means a great deal more in the scheme of things than Brennan and Mallarmé.

FREDERICK E. SLADE.

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

I would like to thank you for publishing the paper by Dr. David Henry Kyes on " The Essence and Functions of Poetry " in the July–August REVIEW, because it is so inspiring and beautiful. How humble his praise of poets makes one feel—how glad if all he points out that poetry does, is true, and therefore with the gifts of poetry—what a responsibility is entrusted to the poet, to give to the world the highest and the utmost, of which he or she is capable. Thus must poets use their gift as a great trust—never neglect an opportunity for writing down an inspired line, however irksome that might be at the time—but pursue it and capture it and think of it as a pearl of great price. True poets should feel honoured if they can indeed fill such a wonderful niche in the cathedral of Poetry and they are indeed the fortunate ones if they can lift for one moment the burden of living. Those are indeed wonderful words of Dr. Kyes. I am enriched by reading them and most grateful for them.

IRENE H. LEWIS, Leatherhead.

MARGUERITE JOHANNSEN, a play by whom was to have been produced by Miss Nancy Price and who had a poem included in *Best Poems of 1939*, writes : I cannot help hoping that this war may see the revival of a deepened interest in poetry. There was something of a poetic revival in the last—though I was of too tender an age to be personally aware of it—and, I think, that it did not survive was due as much to the poets themselves as to the public. I believe that modern poets have spent too much time self-consciously straining and striving after new forms and new effects—there has been too much of the dry bones of construction and too little of the fire of the spirit.

My own opinion is, that if only the feeling is strong enough the most hoary tradition will seem new-born and that new forms and constructions should grow naturally out of the strength of an emotion which can be expressed in no other way—instead of the reader having to chase some gleam of meaning or feeling through some novelty of word-arrangement, carefully built to conceal it.

As members of The Poetry Society we shall all, of course, have to play our part in bringing about this revival—for the moment we may even have as much as we can do to keep THE POETRY REVIEW sailing triumphantly through the stormy waters of war-time, but that much we *must* do.

The Burns Federation is making a gift of a copy of the poems of Burns to each Scottish child who goes abroad under the Children's Overseas Reception scheme.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

It is interesting to find that there is no slightest trace of defeatism, nor even tendency to escapism, in the poetry sent to us to-day. Much of it is militant and none has any possible doubt of the justice and the inevitable issue of this struggle, this costly struggle, that has been forced upon us. Some writers express it well, and some not so well, but for resolution and righteousness they speak as one voice. The Premium this time is allotted to one person, MARGERY SMITH (Nottingham), for four lyrics of a uniformly high standard. It is indeed a pleasure to find, in these haphazard days, someone with a true ear, able beautifully to convey atmosphere and present a living picture. Quite a definite line can be drawn between the "Highly Commended" and the "Commended" groups, but of the former three names stand out as worthy of especial praise—C. R. B. SUMNER (Fordingbridge), for a Symphony in Three Movements, of original character; CHARLES WOODHOUSE (Haslemere) for two very fine Petrarchan sonnets and two most competent and arresting lyrics; and MARY ENGLISH, (Cobham) for a set of poignant and sincere verses, "To My Son." Many in the second list need to strive after that arresting quality, that power to "put it across" that makes verse poetry. There is some lack of originality and the power to see the world of matter and of thought individually. We have no wish for that striving after newness which leads to excess and obscurity, we ask only that freshness of vision which makes the child a natural poet, because he sees the marvellous in the simple. So must the poet be able to serve us beauty from ashes.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

E. B. W. Chappelow, Blackheath.
Marguerite Edgelow, Gerrard's Cross.
Mary English, Cobham.
Pauline Huthwaite, Hawksworth.
P. E. Leaver, Witham.
M. Locherbie-Goff, Northampton.
Phyllis Martin, Redhill.
Ruth Hutchinson Mueller, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
Cynthia Palmer, York.
Brenda Skene, Kensington.
Hilda M. Slade, Worthing.
C. R. B. Sumner, Fordingbridge.
Gertrude Vallance, Cape Town.
Charles Woodhouse, Haslemere.

COMMENDED

E. Barrett, Towersey.
Rachael E. Boulton, Winscombe.
D. R. W. Carr, Ferryhill.
T. E. Casson, Pennington.
Nina Cumming, Hove.
Rhoda Cutbush, Westerham.
Reginald C. Eva, Harrow.
Evelyn Finn, Honiton.
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol.
J. W. G. Heaven, Ealing.
W. Help, Wellington.
Christine Henderson, Montreal.
Eleanor Hough, Bombay.
Gladys Hunkin, St. Ives.
Irene Lewis, Leatherhead.

Redcliffe McKie, Brighton.
D. Moloney, London.
C. Moynihan, Birkenhead.
Enid Norman, Weston-super-Mare.
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland.
E. Curt Peters, Chalfont St. Giles.
T. Pittaway, Frome.
Francis Pritchard, Bournemouth.
A. V. Rao, Calcutta.
Derek B. Reade, Tettenhall.
Claude Rimington, Hampstead.
J. T. Rowe, London.
Roberta Shuttleworth, Guildford.
Bertha M. Skeat, Sedburgh.
Sydney Snell, Harrow Weald.
G. Souster, Dorking.
Muriel Symmons, Salcombe.
Dorothy Traill, Vancouver.
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth.
A. D. N. Wilson, Bedford.
F. J. Woodward, Nottingham.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by October 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s, should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

G. E. O. MULLINS (Burnham) describes what, to a poet, is REVELATION:

I have never seen God.
I have seen light,
And prayed in the night
To the still small voice.
Sometimes the word
Seemed about to be heard:
In the Soul's own choice
Or the song of a bird.

And I said:—"For a sign
I would give my life.
For Assurance divine,
Of an end to the strife."

I never saw God;
But something I heard
When a poem came to me
Thrilling all through me
The resonant word.

Christine L. Henderson (Montreal) expresses Canada in En Avant les Morts !

Our silent rest in Flanders Field is broken :
Who calls to us sleeping on Vimy Ridge ?
What is the word by bomb and cannon spoken
That hurls us from our tomb in sacrilege ?

In such an hour as this our ancient foemen
Blast us from well-earned graves to fight again !
We take the challenge, mark the fateful omen—
A ghostly army rises from the plain !

The fanfare blares world-clamour and world-discord :
Come Joan the Maid, the Galahads of France,
And the Unseen but everliving Presence
To lead the van of our deliverance !

G. S. Oddy (Ryde) sends an All Clear Sonnet composed during Blitzkrieg in the Isle of Wight :

I thank God for flowers. A night of anxious strain.
The sirens wailing their ill-omened note,
As German raiders stream across our moat ;
And rouse the rattle, rip, and roar again.

Time ticked by heart-beats. Whine of diving plane.
The cheery whistle of a packet-boat.
The welcome tinkle of the milkman's float.
Cars. Soldiers clearing shrapnel from the lane.

Then, forth from shelter. Morning fragrant, pure.
The garden shimmering in a golden haze.
Each bloom a part of a more beauteous whole.

Some say this beauty is a subtle lure,
The High Ones christen it Creation's Praise.
But I ascribe it aegis of the soul.

Lettice Haffenden (Shermanbury) confesses in Minor Poet

I have so little to say
My voice is lost
Among the creaking boughs
And birdsong
And the long didactic voices of the wind.

I have so little to say
That, in the trees,
The woodpecker says more

And even owls
Have longer thoughts upon Eternity.

I have so little to say,
And yet that thing
(Half-felt, half-seen)
Is more to me
Than sun or moon or the white splendour of the stars,
Is louder than the cannon of the sea.

The following tribute in memory of the late John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) was read by the author, Mrs. Agnes Foley MacDonald, one of our most enthusiastic members and wife of the Premier of Nova Scotia, at the March meeting of the Nova Scotia Centre of The Poetry Society.

" I sit alone, and musing fills
My breast with pain that will not die
Till once again o'er greener hills
We ride together, you and I."
—JOHN BUCHAN. *" Fratri Dilectissimo."*

What though your feet may never stand
Again beside the banks of Tweed ?
What though the voice of that loved land
Will beat on ears that may not heed ?

Somewhere beyond the frosty stars,
Above the still Canadian snow,
You stand tonight at Heaven's bars
And see again a face you know.

And clasp again a brother's hand
And hear a voice beloved of yore.
Now in this new and golden land
Together you will roam once more.

And come perchance across the trail
That leads to old remembered joys,
The moorland games, each hill and vale
You knew, when you and he were boys.

What of the book we may not read ? . . .
What of the golden pen, now still ? . . .
You two will find another Tweed,
You two will ride the greener hill.

ARTHUR ROW writes: It is not ill-fitting that the star of poesy should run high over Albion and shine with a fiercer light when the clouds are

at their blackest, and it is pleasing indeed to note that the selfsame lamp which fed the genius of Shakespeare, Milton and Shelley, in the various epochs of danger and glory in which these great luminaries lived is shedding to-day its kindly and customary light on many writers of beautiful verse whose names are not yet chronicled in the archives of fame.

Poetry of To-day No. 56 deserves an intensive perusal. Its general level of excellence is very inspiring ; the most noteworthy of its writers contributing poems which are masterpieces in style dignified by a nobility of subject. Lynd Nathan in his 540 line poem "The Age of Gold" gives a most accomplished satire on the artificiality of the world's money system, and his lofty and spiritual passages at the end of the poem (which are emphasized by a change of stanza arrangement) are most impressive. "Quest" by G. E. O. Mullins carries a word-painting of unusual beauty which is reminiscent in parts of the theme and manner of Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*; and in "To F. T. Norris" C. J. Gray tells in an earnest and convincing composition the story of one whose greatness did not rest upon idle fame. Captain C. E. H. Jacobs accords in his magnificent and forceful style three fine poems of which "Niagara Falls" is the most striking, and Christmas Humphreys shows his ability to command a respectful attention in his three poems "Connemara," "To a Dictator on War's Eve" and "The Poet and the Rose" and in his sonnet "Autumn." A very interesting feature is O. L. Holland's translation of the opening lines (1–212) of Homer's *Odyssey* into lines of 15 and 16 syllables. which are full of high poetry and suggestion, and E. B. W. Chappelow in a long poem "Attabiyah," which is laden with the sensuous perfumes of the East, informs us of the origin of the phrase tabby cat. There is much customary good work by the Rev. T. Pittaway, Gerald Souster, P. E. C. Duce and others, and there are two charming sonnets by J. Sackville Martin. Among the lady contributors should be mentioned Bertha M. Skeat, Gladys Huskin, Grace Dorothy Reeves, Frances Pritchard and Muriel Symmons ; and Roberta Shutleworth shows herself a true poet in her three contributions, "The Sun," "A Bowl of Flowers" and "To a Poet," in which work she begs the poet to turn to nature for his inspiration in the following closing lines :

> Woo her to sing in simple truth—
> As only Nature can,
> Whose voice alone has power to wake
> The God in man.

Mr. Allen Jeynes, acting as examiner at a Poetry Recital by Holders of the Poetry Society's Adult Silver Medal for Distinction in the Art of Speaking Verse attempting to qualify for the Gold Medal on July 17th, said he was favourably impressed by the general high standard

of the candidates. The rhythm was good in all cases and this had an excellent effect on poem production. A very marked consideration was that they could speak the poem as themselves, or as representing the poet who wrote it, or as the person from whose lips the words were supposed to fall. They identified themselves partly with the poet and partly with the mood he was in. They heard a good deal about overdramatizing lyrics, but this did not mean that they had to take away all the liveliness from voice and manner, or fail to infuse intensity with physical energy, which was so often absent from the rendering of emotional poetry. You heard this done on the wireless when quite intelligent people spoke or read passionate verse in a subdued and often melancholy manner. Mr. Jeynes proceeded to give valuable individual criticism in which he drew attention to some cases of faulty timing, lack of sympathy and synchronisation of verbal and facial expression, too even level of tonal quality, failure to hold on to the end, some drawing away instead of active pursuit of the emotional idea, and in one case a too great intensity in consequence of which the vowels suffered and the sibilants weakened. He awarded a Gold Medal to Miss Lesley Crease who identified herself with the mood and a sense of the poems (" Ode to the West Wind " and " Happy is England Now ") with all the technicalities admirably observed but concealed with fine variations and differentiation. Like a good examiner he was always open to be thrilled and marvelled by great poetry, and Miss Lesley Crease had achieved this. Miss Joyce Stevens was specially commended.

Gertrude Vallance (Cape Town) to the Editor, July 16, 1940: I want to send you my thoughts and best wishes for the part The Poetry Review will still play in this work of the Empire that so enthrals us all. Over here, some of us are uplifted by the keen appreciation of the hour to which Britain and its Empire have come and our thoughts run, at least, mine do, " Oh, to be in England," in the forefront of the greatest crusade the world has known.

Dr. J. Aquilina, Vittoria (Malta): The international situation has had its effect on Maltese life. The Poetry Review is now more welcome than ever, standing out unscathed as a messenger of human beauty and the eternal values of life amidst all the horror of this ugly anti-cultural war.

Mrs. Josephine Hancock Logan, one of the founders of National Poetry Week, has been elected a vice-president of The Poetry Society, and has become President of the Chicago Centre, of which Miss Grace Lopez Diaz is Secretary.

For particulars of the Friday matinees see p. 382.

A BALLADE OF HOME-BORN HEROES

[S. Rhodesia's Jubilee—September, 1890—September, 1940]

I

IN Queen Victoria's age of gold
They sought a land they did not know.
Think what they left! What peace unsold
In England then so sure and slow!—
Lanes, high-hedged, with rose-briars a-blow—
Green fieldways fringed with willows poll'd!
Our England's not their England. No!
Years worsen as the world grows old.

II

Over the Veld their waggons roll'd,
God's virgin veld of long ago—
When days were bright, and nights were cold—
With all a million stars to show.
How sunset made the granite glow
In pinks and purples manifold!
Their new-found land was fair—heigh-ho!
Years worsen as the world grows old.

III

Gone is the peace of weald and wold
They came from. Now Time's wors'ning woe
Hurries to grasp in strangle-hold
That promised land they travell'd to.
O'er some of them Veld-grasses grow:
For most of them a bell has toll'd:
Time's wide scythe-sweep our flow'rs must mow.
Years worsen as the world grows old.

Envoi

Each dawn I hear the red cocks crow—
Pealing their morning pray'r so bold—
"God, make an end of Time, our Foe!
Years worsen as the world grows old."

Arthur Shearly Cripps.

AT THE CENOTAPH

PURCELL AND CHOPIN PLAYING

Written 1933, *but dedicated to the heroically Dead of* 1939-40

IN this our darkest hour
We summon the high sisters—
Speak, sing, pour forth your dower
Flooding our faint with power;
That which high Jove entrusted to your keeping,
That on our days of feast so often sleeping—
Break the sweet casket now!

Call up those shapes that pulse in wind and sky,
That wait their birth in music—this is why,
This high transmuting of a hopeless grief,
This raising of spilt blood, this wind of God
That lifts upon its wings the fallen leaf,
Gold sunset wraith freed of the burying sod,
Spirit ascending from the coffined clay,
Already singing in its purer air,
Already singing its new day is fair,
Distant, above, beyond all thought can follow.
O battlefield forgotten! dead Death at heel,
Behold the Revelation's broken seal.

REDCLIFFE MCKIE.

THE MEAN CITY

HAD Jesus been born in this cul-de-sac,
In this house, in this room, first floor back,
He would have been starved of the breath of life
And a dole of sunlight.
I think it better to be born amid cattle
And the cleanliness of dung
Than here in this tenement where drunkards prattle
And filth is womb-sung.
It is a matter of choice no doubt,
Hygiene begins with the mind—
Give me the straw for a swaddling clout,
A mother of God's Kind.

EDWARD KENYON.

WALK IN WARTIME

WE took the walk desirous only of leaving
The punctual bulletin behind. In silence
We must sink down into ourselves again,
Take root, or the insidious bombardment
Of spirit would rain like meteors on the moon,
Pitting an arid surface.
The rainless days
Had withered hedge and fern, sucked dry the bracken,
Made berried bushes scarlet a month too soon.
The mid-night bloom of sloes glowed nakedly
On leafless thorn, and blackberries hung like vines,
Dripping with glossy seed.
Leaving the lane
And across the stubble fields, ash plants betrayed
By brittle leaf the camouflaged Home Guard's
Outpost, scanning the moor. The bronzed young giant,
(Hedger and ditcher sometime), shook back the wing
Of sloe-black hair, and swung his searchlight eyes,
Luminous in gold skin, like a kingfisher's
Sudden blue flash across a tawny stream.
Waving and recognized, we struck downhill
To the village below in perdurable pattern,
With gardens bounded where the crisping brook
Made islands of fine sand, and housed in gloom
The sensitive trout. Under the brooding boughs
Dippers above the foam-encircled rocks
Darted with sudden scream. And as we stood,
The blue crane, startled, soundlessly rose with slow
Beat of great rhythmic wings.
The cottages
Ringing the green, the long, triangular inn
Whitewashed, dun-thatched, with grassy courtyard where
White pigeons preening on lintel and low roof
Made public pleasure with their loves, these were,
Like leaves, the frame for flowering, shot through
By timelessness, as when the pulsing bell
Chiming the quarters, gave transparent meaning
And undercurrent of eternity.

These were the fugitive flowers on that tree
Of Time, sending long shadows down the slope :
These were breast level and undimmed :
The fresh
Young nursemaid holding up the struggling babe
With sun-burned limbs copper against her cream,
While the tall young parents, calm-eyed normalcy,
Loaded their car by the green wicket gate . . .
The raw-faced cowman with unsullied gaze
Nodding his huge delight at the wine-dark moor
Bruised with low threat of rain . . .
The knotted labourer limping home to tea,
Calling his mates by name across the green.
Light quivered in the sombre afternoon
When the blue-pinafored child with yellow hair,
Laughed with her dark companion at the well.

O let the neurotic, the revolutionary,
The misfit, never take root, but pass as I
Am passing, seeing remote but clearly, as
In dream we walk unheeded and unseen.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

COUNTRY WEATHER

COO'D crooning soothed and mateing lured
The pigeon paused and waiting heard
Peace passing warm through the forests—

Cold-shrinking muffled hurricane strife
The wind in the beeches tears at its life
Swept over whistling orchestral-hills—

Gold-glowing spilling liquid folds
The softening sunset spans the wolds
While rest
Sleep-lidded
impassive
yearns

E. M. STEPHENSON.

THE PROPHET OF ENGLAND

AWAKE! awake O sleeper in the land of shadows, wake! This was the typical incessant cry of perhaps the greatest of English prophetic poets. Blake was continually urging men to "life and fuller," urging them to awaken to a consciousness of their divine origin and divine destiny, to stir the "sleepers in the land of shadows" from their lethargy. As Mr. Middleton Murry in a recent broadcast talk pointed out, the supreme danger to civilization lies in *inertia*, a truth recognized by all great thinkers, poets, prophets.[1] There is tragedy in the words of Jesus :

I am come that men should have life, and have it more abundantly

because of the plain evidence that this great life, accessible to every man, is rejected by all but the few. The greatest poems, the greatest books, have all been written in the cause of Life, to rouse men to an awareness of the glory and the wonder and the power, yet—possibly because to accept this challenge means to accept at the same moment danger, difficulty and the necessity for ceaseless effort—almost invariably the challenge is refused and the potential inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven sinks back into the hell of inertia, and thence into spiritual and moral turpitude.

Among the manifestly prophetic poets, Blake is pre-eminently the poet for this moment in England's history. A study of his work will help to maintain the necessary sense of proportion, because even while he deals with temporal conditions the sense of the eternal, always paramount in his mind, inevitably prevails. In the following passage, for example, the temporal and the eternal are strikingly blended :

The youth of England, hid in gloom, curse the pain'd heavens, compell'd
Into the deadly night to see the form of Albion's Angel,

Their parents brought them forth, and aged ignorance preaches, canting,
On a vast rock, perceiv'd by those senses that are closed from thought :

[1] Cf. Hermann Keyserling (*From Suffering to Fulfilment*, p. 243) : From the point of view of Spirit inertia is the one unpardonable sin, because inertia . . . is the negation of Spirit.

Bleak, dark and abrupt it stands and overshadows London city.
. . . . .
They saw the Serpent temple lifted above, shadowing the Island white :
They heard the voice of Albion's Angel howling in flames of Orc
Seeking the trump of the last doom.

Above the rest the howl was heard from Westminster louder and louder :
The Guardian of the secret codes forsook his ancient mansion,
With dismal torment sick, hanging upon the wind, he fled
Grovelling along Great George Street through the Park gate, all the soldiers
Fled from his sight. . . .

And another passage in the same poem, strangely prophetic of the present time :

. . . the shadows are fill'd
With spectres, and the windows wove over with curses of iron :
Over the doors " Thou shalt not," and over the chimneys " Fear " is written :
With bands of iron round their necks fasten'd into the walls
The citizens, in leaden gyves the inhabitants of suburbs
Walk heavy. . . .

But there is a victorious note in the lines from *Jerusalem* :

Comfort thyself in my strength ; the time will arrive
When all Albion's injuries shall cease, and when we shall
Embrace him, tenfold bright, rising from his tomb in immortality.
They have divided themselves by Wrath, they must be united by Pity. . . .

Because he lived perfectly at ease in the two worlds which for the majority of men are widely separated, Blake has often been considered mad. To the man who lives entirely in the factual world, the sense of the eternal interpenetrating the temporal, as in these passages, brings too keen a sense of eerie discomfort. The Spiritual Forms ever-present to Blake's vision would be difficult companions for the man in the street. Blake's famous statement that the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with him has been the subject of great controversy among critics who can only interpret poetry from one angle ; such critics are obviously by nature unfitted to approach the great prophetic—or indeed any—poets. In this passage Blake enquires of the two prophets

how they dared to assert that God spoke to them. Isaiah's reply would be Blake's own, and equally the reply of any mystic or visionary:

I saw no God, nor heard any, *in a finite organical perception.*

There is a sense in which spirit and matter are eternally divorced, certain experiences have no contact with matter and the physical whatsoever; "visionary experience" does not involve physical sight: the vision is "seen" in a way quite indefinable in physical terms, just as in other experiences involving "voices," no "voice" is heard with the physical ears. This is precisely what the materialist investigator cannot understand, and this is how Blake did indeed dine with the great prophets, and spent his days in the company of the Spiritual Forms and Emanations whom he named Urizen, Los, Enitharmon, Luvah, Tharmas, and so on. If this consciousness were more common, if, that is, man were aware of the spiritual bases of life and consequently of his own potential grandeur, most of life's tragedies would be averted, certainly the titanic tragedy of war, and for this reason: a sense of significance, and consequently of purpose, would immediately invest life with the excitement and vitality which every man instinctively desires, whether consciously or not. It is this desire which drives him to search for "romance" and excitement in all sorts of fictitious and often deleterious forms. Usually the longing for romance is associated with erotic impulses, but traced to its source it lies far deeper, and is precisely due to this urgent need for an assurance of significance and ultimate meaning in a life which too often seems purposeless and empty, with no apparent goal. This is why war, despite its evident horrors, holds so strong an appeal: at best, it stirs to a sense of purpose, and life suddenly develops intense significance because of a prospective goal; at worst, it appeals to that very need for romance and excitement provided normally only by erotic plays, films, and literature, "thrillers," crook films and other similar monstrosities.

Poetry continuously, tirelessly, points men to this sig-

nificance, this vitality and excitement. Our present tragic disorders may be traced directly to the decline in poetry, and, contemporaneously, to the decline in Christianity as a living force. Hardy was the last in the tradition of great English poets. This century, and especially the period since the war of 1914–1918, has seen an almost complete collapse. Poets have—wilfully, it would seem, but perhaps merely blindly—misunderstood the high function of poetry. If they have read they have certainly forgotten, or deliberately spurned, all Shelley so passionately asserted in *The Defence of Poetry*: primarily that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," and that therefore their responsibility is heavy. The post-war poets, preoccupied with disintegration, despair, and transient political issues, apparently forgot, or did not realize, that while all great social reforms have originated in the minds of the "unacknowledged legislators," these reforms were not approached *directly* but rather, true to the prophetic tradition, the poets revealed the *deep spiritual truths* which must prelude all genuine development or revolution. The direct approach, which naturally appeals because of its immediate apparent results, is never productive of permanent good, is, in fact, more likely to lead to disaster. But the urgent young poets of the post-war age have ridden rough-shod over the great traditions of the English poets, and have attempted to impose on society highly discreditable illegitimate children of the divine Muse, to the embarrassment of all who still care for genuine poetry. In plain fact, the decadent poets with their bastard brood have been leading the way to the inferno into which civilization has now tumbled. Again, they have sinned in their attempt to bring about a divorce between poetry and religion, due, in the majority of cases, to their allegiance to Marxism, a doctrine avowedly anti-Christian. It is lamentable that so many brilliant young men have been unable to understand that the hope for the future lies in a form of Socialism, true, but only in the kind that is implicit in Christianity.

The message of genuine poetry cannot be negative. Certainly, since the poet's concern is with life in its entirety,

it would be false to stress *only* the positive, and an over-optimistic view is usually synonymous with a superficial view, *but*, and this is the crux, *because* great poetry is concerned in the last resort with the eternal values, there must always be a movement, even if through gloom and shadows, towards the light. This fine and final philosophy of poetry Browning so well understood. Attention to his vital message might have done much to avert the disasters of our age. Instead, we have been led by decadent, disillusioned, destructive thinkers, with their philosophies of darkness and despair. The troubling "inner" truths exposed by Freud, the godless revolutionary designs of Marx, the perverse interpretations of the worst in D. H. Lawrence, have all fed the appetites of the post-1914 generation. Freud was a great pioneer, for, as all philosophers know, the essential key is buried in the hinterland of the self, and can be discovered there, and there only, but sex, unless properly understood, is more likely to bury the key still deeper. A proper understanding of sex involves research of a very different nature, as Blake profoundly realized. Marx was also a pioneer: he saw that the existing social system could not stand, and must lead to disaster, but a revolutionary philosophy *imposed from without* and in essence destructive, can only produce evils greater than those it seeks to cure. D. H. Lawrence was one of the greatest of modern prophets, but too often his method of approach to the problems he worked to elucidate defeated its own ends; moreover, as almost invariably happens, his disciples often sadly misrepresented and consequently betrayed, their master. In each of these three instances, the lack of a Christian background precisely explains the failure, the reason why the doctrine has proved destructive instead of constructive. The investigation of the self in the service of God—for a deep understanding of the self and its mysteries is a primary essential to anything like adequate service—a social revolution based on the brotherhood of man, on love of the neighbour—in other words, a Christian Socialism, which could not involve violence—a constructive sex-revolution based on a deep understanding of the

creative power of human love and its potential divinity—these would have led to a world nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

All this Blake richly understood; all is to be found in his work. He knew the disastrous results of the decline of poetry:

> Poetry Fetter'd Fetters the Human Race. Nations are Destroyed or Flourish in proportion as Their Poetry, Painting and Music are Destroy'd or Flourish.
>
> (Introduction to *Jerusalem*.)

He understood the need for action, for a revival of the powers of the Imagination:

> Rouse up, O Young Men of the New Age! Set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court and the University, who would, if they could, for ever depress Mental and prolong Corporeal War. Believe Christ and his Apostles that there is a Class of Men whose whole delight is in Destroying. We do not want either Greek or Roman Models if we are but just and true to our own Imaginations, those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live for ever in Jesus our Lord.
>
> (Preface to *Milton*.)

"Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets!" he cries.

His was the only true gospel: gentleness and strength (spiritual power), and universal love. This is embodied in the apparently artless poem, *The Divine Image* in words and phrases of a moving child-like simplicity:

> To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
> All pray in their distress;
> And to these virtues of delight
> Return their thankfulness.
>
> For Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
> Is God, our father dear,
> And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
> Is Man, his child and care.
>
> For Mercy has a human heart,
> Pity a human face,
> And Love, the human form divine,
> And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

And again in *Jerusalem* (25):

Injury the Lord heals, but Vengeance cannot be healed.
As the Sons of Albion have done to Luvah, so they have in him
Done to the Divine Lord and Saviour, who suffers with those who suffer;
For not one sparrow can suffer and the whole Universe not suffer also
In all its Regions, and its Father and Saviour not pity and weep.
But Vengeance is the destroyer of Grace and Repentance in the bosom
Of the Injurer, in which the Divine Lamb is cruelly slain.
Descend, O Lamb of God, and take away the imputation of sin
By the creation of States and the deliverance of individuals Evermore. Amen.

Also in the Preface to *The Everlasting Gospel*:

This alone is the Gospel, and this is the Life and Immortality brought to light by Jesus, even the Covenant of Jehovah, which is this: If you forgive one another your Trespasses, so shall Jehovah forgive you, That he himself may dwell among you, but if you Avenge, you Murder the Divine Image, and he cannot dwell among you.

The doctrine of the strength of gentleness, and equally the law governing the dire results of vengeance, has not yet been understood, nor ever examined as a possible practical solution to the world's ills. Yet there is no other. All others inevitably fail. Forgiveness, not vengeance; love not hatred, is the very core of Jesus's message, and the one hope of salvation. But men turn a deaf ear, and "all is confusion, all is tumult."

Jerusalem is full of prophecies concerning England's destiny:

Then the Divine Vision like a silent sun appear'd above
Albion's dark rocks, setting behind the Gardens of Kensington
On Tyburn's river in clouds of blood. . . .

. . . . . and in the Sun a Human Form appear'd
And thus the Voice Divine went forth upon the rocks of Albion ;
I elected Albion for my glory : I gave to him the Nations
Of the whole Earth. He was the Angel of my Presence and all
The Sons of God were Albion's Sons, and Jerusalem was my joy. . .
. . . . . Albion must sleep
The Sleep of Death till the Man of Sin and Repentance be reveal'd. . .
. . . . .
London is a stone of her ruins, Oxford is the dust of her walls,
Sussex and Kent are her scatter'd garments, Ireland her holy place,
And the murdered bodies of her little ones are Scotland and Wales.
The Cities of the Nations are the smoke of her consummation,
The Nations are her dust, ground by the chariot wheels
Of her lordly conquerors, her palaces levell'd with the dust.
I come that I may find a way for my banished ones to return.
Fear not, O little Flock, I come. Albion shall rise again.

And in the *Prologue to King John* :

O, yet may Albion smile again, and stretch her peaceful arms, and raise her golden head, exultingly ! Her citizens shall throng about her gates, her mariners shall sing upon the sea, and myriads shall to her temples crowd ! Her sons shall joy as in the morning ! Her daughters sing as to the rising year !

After the peace with Napoleon, concluded in 1802, Blake wrote to Flaxman :

I rejoice to hear that your Great Work is accomplished. Peace opens the way to greater still. The Kingdoms of this world are now become the Kingdoms of God and His Christ, and we shall reign with him for ever and ever. The Reign of Literature and the Arts commences. Blessed are those who are found studious of Literature and Humane and polite accomplishments. Such have their lamps burning and such shall shine as the stars.

He had no doubt concerning the only conditions of true peace, the only possible background for a world-order where wars could be no more. The nations must be

. . . united . . . in One Religion, the religion of Jesus, the most Ancient, the Eternal and Everlasting Gospel. (*Jerusalem*, 27.)

and always

. . . the Divine Hand was upon (him) bearing (him) through darkness. . . .
. . . . .

Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble.

DALLAS KENMARE.

CHRISTMAS

SOFT starlight in the snow, ah what a glow
Of delving loveliness.
The candle trees alight, oh what a sight
Of shining goodliness.
The man a child again, nor any would disdain
Such erstwhile wholesomeness.
A sweetness in the heart, some say it is a part
Of rising godliness.
Some say a peace will fall, one Christmas festival
Of inborn holiness,
That man will see a star, rise bright beyond the bar
Of his inclemency.

P. E. LEAVER.

DAY DREAM

IF I could climb a rainbow
And take my earth cloud-high
And travel on a nimbus
With white stars floating by,

If I could see the tree-tops
Green, stirring waves below
And toss a skylark's bubble
Bright-sounding to and fro,

If I could find the footprints
Where April comes and goes
And put on twilight sandals
To tread the dusk with rose,

If I could glimpse the morning
That has not lit her star
And draw aside the mantle
Where folded ages are,

Then I would dare to day dream
And live my dreams in part,
Then I would dare unravel
The secrets of my heart.

PHOEBE RAYNER.

WAR-WORK, 1940

. . . See, there are flowers to bring
And candles for the service of the King
With bread and wine and faith for offering.

Lo, where a silken curtain falls unfurled
The tabernacled Beauty of the World
Gives benediction. Women and men war-hurled
In agony lift pain-bewildered eyes
To where the One Great Perfect Sacrifice
Opens the Gate that leads to paradise.

" Butter or guns " ? It matters not ; the dead
Need neither. Let prayers and Mass be said
Where bleeding Feet hang 'neath a thorn-bound Head.

. . . See, there are flowers to bring
Candles and wine and bread for offering ;
For sacrifice ? For Sacrifice—a KING.

MARY WINTER WERE.

VISION

THESE are the things that I would be,
So to be worthy, love, of thee.
Clear as the stars, brave as the sun,
Tender as moonlight, and at one
With the steadfast hills in constancy.
Firm as a rock to be thy stay ;
Swift as the wind to go thy way ;
Heart as deep as the deep-sea caves,
Light as foam flecks, eager as waves
To repeat its love for thee day by day.
Changefully changeless as the skies,
Fair as the dawn before thine eyes ;
Slower to blame than to comprehend,
Glad as the rainbow to amend,
And as the trees serene and wise.
These are the things that I would be,
So to be worthy, love, of thee.

B. F. PARGITER.

EXILED

WE cannot be divided
By deed or mile or age,
Though I may hunger homeless
While you starve in a cage.

The thrush sings in the hawthorn,
I wake and lose my fear ;
Day breaks and you are with me—
It is your voice I hear.

The cool west wind blows softly
My aching brow to heal :
I turn my face to meet it—
It is your breath I feel.

I wander in the woodland,
Where silver meets with gold :
I grasp the slender birch branch—
It is your hand I hold.

Below me the clear river
Flows strong and bright and free :
I gaze in its deep secrets
Your eyes are all I see.

The throbbing water murmurs
On every stone it meets :
I find the eternal rhythm—
It is your heart that beats.

And here the quiet moss fastens
Beneath the silent oak :
I stood and touch its softness—
It is your hair I stroke.

I lie down on the green bank,
Here where the grass grows deep,
And clover flowers are fragrant—
'Tis on your breast I sleep.

So you are mine for ever,
And we can never part—
Though while I wander weeping
In chains you break your heart.

RHODA E. CUTBUSH.

THE REFUGEES

A VICTORY of arms must be no monument
To these that walk with hearts unsearchable
The broken roads of rampant, inexorable
Destruction, bare of every ornament
Creative man builds round the sentiment
Of meditative hope. Formidable
They lived and died, inestimable
Their sacrifice for victory's sacrament.

To-morrow shall be ours to vindicate
Our cause with peace in every enterprise
That leads our steps to make inviolate
Our best endeavour and immortalize
The dead with living more compassionate,
And love is with us to reorganize.

CHARLES WOODHOUSE.

THE PLOUGHMAN

THE ploughman ploughs his furrow
To hold an unknown store,
His eyes toward the morrow
Are set for evermore.

Into eternal sunrise
He drives a double team
Through fields of misty autumn
In a land whereof men dream.

The ploughman ploughs his furrow,
The seed is all unknown:
He goes to meet the morrow,
Immortal and alone. NEVILL MACGEOUGH BOND.

TO A PILOT

He said, "I saw the sunset through the leaves."
All of the lovely day was in his eyes:
the misty mountain dawn that stains the skies
with shining, fragile light and weaves
his peace; his infinite tenderness that grieves
to hear a broken bird's pain-sodden cries;
beneath a fern, a star-flower's shy surprise;
the holy calm the evening Angelus leaves.

He said, "I saw a plane with silver wings."
His wild and passionate dreams rose from that hour.
Peace shrivelled like the hidden star-white flower
within the sun of hot imaginings. . . .

The docile pawn of dictatorial kings
he streaks across the sky with war-winged power.

DOROTHY TRAIL.

NEMESIS

ASSERTIVE men of megaphonic voice
Boast of their murderous thought, and shrill
The placid air with strident screaming.
Theirs is a doleful part, a stagnant choice:
To strike, or else stay ever still,
Eating vain words of monstrous seeming.

And thus they bluster, surge and stagger on,
Piling dull crimes until the sum
Appals a world with dreadful meaning.
And War, with bloody hands and visage wan,
Bursts through contending lands, while engines hum
Above dark towns, for torture gleaning.

Aggressive men of megaphonic lung
At length are quiet—they lie still,
Beneath rough stones loose-piled, and bleeding.
Beyond those shattered walls, where late has hung
A noisome pall, then looms the hill
Sweet in the sun, the wreck unheeding.

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

TO W.L.A.

DEAD stands thy lodge within its street,
The forms and faces that I meet
Pass all indifferent as a drifting cloud,
Being denied the grace
Of that once possible face
That was the soul to me and centre of the crowd.

Weary without thee all this country seems,
And most reluctant to resume its dress
Of springtide's loveliness :
The townsfolk seem to ply
Their tasks halfheartedly,
And all its life but shews like pageantry in dreams.

How were it otherwise
With one whose wistful eyes
Still look right on thro' space and straitening wall,
Until all bounds, grown thin,
Fade,—immaterial,—
Being stretched so far by will to take thee in.

H.B.J.

PETT LEVEL

HERE on the edge of Freedom, where the hills
Come to an end and salt sea-marshes grey
Laugh with the children all the summer day ;
Here where the wind is used by ancient mills
And sunrise takes the townsman's breath away,
Dull care disperses, idle clamour stills,
Where wonder lives and life is given to clay,
I lose my life, and find it, free from ills.

Old Time's no more, and space is nothing now,
The moment is eternal, I shall keep
The vision with me waking or asleep,
And men will mark its peace upon my brow.
The wind is free, light knows no bounds, and I,
At rest on earth, use freedom from the sky.

AIDAN CLARKE.

NUITS NOIRES

BLACK and curtained the heavens,
Earth shows never a glimmer,
Crouched as tiger in jungle,
Fear lurks formless and blind.

Far from measureless distance,
Draws the ominous murmur,
Groan of ponderous pinions,
Dooming instant destruction.

Gruff and gruff through the cloudbanks
Bark the sentinels waiting.
Shattering roars of thunder
Peal through the vaulted dome.

Sharp report of machine-gun
Shells that burst through the ether—
Silence—and Hell's renewal—
Silence again at last.

Lone I lie in the darkness,
Praying for souls above me,
Wrestling in mortal anguish
Praying for homes and mothers.

Love in Whose arms I shelter,
Love that enwraps, enfolds me,
Scatter all powers of darkness,
Hasten Thy coming Dawn!

Sanderstead, Oct. 1st, 1940. BERTHA M. SKEAT.

I have very much enjoyed THE POETRY REVIEW for the current months, especially the lovely " Scherzo " and the noble poem " And There Came a Day." This poem is reminiscent of the words of Dorothy Thompson, the American critic, who said that something happened to the British people, between the evacuation of Norway and the retreat from Dunkirk, turning vacillation and bewilderment into a stern, courageous purpose. She said also that the British die well—from Lord Nelson to Nurse Cavell: D. E. OSBORNE, Wakefield, September 30th.

WHY

WHY have we turned this way?
Why do we walk where leaves are falling,
Where no flower blooms, no bird is calling,
And even Time itself is palling?
Why have we turned this way?

Does Winter's wistful questioning
Invoke the answering voice of Spring—
When every bird will sweeter sing,
Because the woods once silent were,
Because the trees have once been bare,
And sorrow comes to make more fair
Delight in everything?

Why have we turned this way?
Why have we chosen thus to die,
Poison the earth, pollute the sky,
And every law of love defy?
Why have we turned this way?

Will the pain of tribulation
Be the birth-pangs of the nation
To a life of dedication—
When even love will lovelier be,
Because hate's arrogant decree
Once showed such dire deformity,
Such positive negation?

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH.

Anne Throop Craig, of New York, writes: Your POETRY REVIEW is very heartening to me to read. It is good to find your banner flying in the cause of conserving decent traditions of letters—as to craftsmanship, but, as it seems from a very constant trend in your expressed sentiments, very particularly too, in the cause of the hidden core of poetry. It is conspicuously though, the heyday of the reporter of travels and adventures, that we are living in now: all good raw material—drama in the rough; but only after an age in the crucible will this great flux of realistic discovery emerge as fine gems! (All of which I need not tell you!) At present the Initiate Soul of our world sits behind a veil—likely enough willingly patient, and watches, seeing past it all, the fine gem. . . . Thanks be for groups like yours, that watch too, as guardians!

A WAR-TIME CONCENTRATION :

V. S. Staff outlines The Poet's Development : Modern poets are experimenting, and they have chosen an intellectual, or a pseudo-intellectual line for their experiments. Some of those who follow the fashion of the time praise them, but the admiring throng is growing thin. The critics, once interested, have grown bitter and antagonistic. Here and there the voice of one who cares for poetry but has been irritated by the noise of the moderns, cries testily : " I told you so. It is a barren age." Finally, the pessimist : " It is the end of poetry." Outside the poetic circle the philosopher, more patiently, reminds men that this is the age of machines, of scientific discoveries succeeding one another with bewildering speed. Life is swifter, harder, a graceless, unlovely experience whose pleasures are without happiness.

It is not for the poets to despair. Is not one of their functions to prophesy, and another to dream dreams and see visions ? They should break away, then, from the hypnotic influence of machine rhythm. Let them work in silence, let them train themselves, master the technique of their art and await the newcomers. Perhaps the poets of the present age will be nameless and without fame, but may they not live as a group, as predecessors or forerunners of those to come ? How often have the greatest poets emerged from a background carefully prepared by others whose identity is lost in chapter headings : " Early drama," " Early lyric," " The Beginnings of Epic Poetry."

There is a chance of an adventure, a romantic quest. Those who are to come need their pathway prepared ; some may construct a concrete foundation, others may strew roses all the way ; it is for the poets to carry lanterns, that the strangers may find their way in the darkness. And it is for the poets to invite them to come.

What will the new poetry be like ? We may choose ; it will be what we desire it to be. If we long for it to have great beauty, depth of soul, and harmonies so lovely that we could weep at the pain of them—they are ours for the asking, or for the working. We have only to desire them, and to believe in their existence.

Poets may forget that this is a three-dimensional world. Indeed, it should not be so for them. They should practise crossing the bridge between earth and heaven, visit paradise often and make friends of the angels who will teach them in dreams the mystical power of words and unlock new secrets of sound and rhythm. So shall the new be created. Shall we not work for the new creation ?

Poets are born and not made, we often hear quoted. Even if that be true for ever, they must grow in good soil and their development can be helped forward or retarded by the quality of their nutrition and the atmosphere they breathe. This is not a plea for the poet to be born with a silver spoon in his mouth ; have not the greatest poems from the time of Isaiah borne the mark of physical hardship and mental suffering ? But the poets must be protected equally from suffocation by material conditions, a surfeit of scientific appliances and absorption

by the niggling detail of a too complicated day-to-day life. By protection against his environment I do not mean that a devoted band of helpers should surround each poet, *he must equip himself* against the insidious forces of dense materialism. If the burning desire for, and intense love of, beauty and truth in the minds of men be answered, as a prayer, and a great poet (or poets) be born, endowed with the musician's ear, the artist's eye and the prophet's soul, it yet remains for him *to make himself*. All his contemporaries can do is to help and encourage. That is much, but it is of no more use than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, if the poet do not play his part and transform his own soul for the need of the world. It must be trained by a sterner discipline than the rules of Persian poetry. The kind of training he must undergo is well known in the East and practised by oriental philosophers, but no such system is recognised in the West, and the individual must plan his own way of life. Some of us believe that that is a better method, because certain powers of independence and strength are attained at an earlier stage of development. The right discipline, self-imposed, will give the poet, among other powers, the ability to remain undamaged by materialism, though he becomes increasingly sensitive to the real danger to humanity from its power to submerge the "higher self." While he suffers with (and more than) his fellow men, he has access in his innermost self to a realm of beauty, truth and harmony where his youth and strength are constantly renewed. *There* must be his well of inspiration, there he will see the living colours, hear the future melodies of his verse. In silence and concentration he will listen, in that sphere which is, after all, his natural home. With a deep sigh, a tearing of the heart-strings, he returns to earth to translate his experience.

If the way has been well prepared for him, there is a chance of his being understood and of the world wishing to know his work; if it has not, even if he were born, neither he nor his prophecy could long survive the hostile deafness of the materially and mechanically minded.

It may be said that I am only trying to describe inspiration in giving this outline of a poet's development; I do not pretend to show how this sensitive plant unfolded in the past, only to indicate the different treatment necessitated by present conditions. Poetic theories, as historical ones, continue to voice the opinions of two opposite groups: those who believe that history repeats itself and that human nature does not change, and those who believe that while details in the pattern may recur, deeper and essential differences are present between one epoch and the next; that the development of potentialities latent in the human soul is not only probable, but certainly promised.

For this reason I would suggest that the time has come in our highly scientific and utilitarian era for new means to be employed to ensure the advent of a great poet or poets. I do not mean to infer that scientific discoveries are of satanic origin, but that their all-pervading influence represents a dangerously one-sided development

which it is the destiny of the poet, among other artists, to counterbalance. Man is body, mind and spirit: sciences of the body and mind are being developed apace; except in a few lonely outposts the science of the soul is not merely neglected, but completely ignored. The old ballad music of traditional religion continues to be sung throughout the land, either mechanically or with revivalist fervour. But the glorious lyrical and epical strains of inspired philosophy and religion are seldom heard, even among those who profess to teach. The attention which might be given to metaphysics is often expended upon psychology by the modern curious Athenian.

The poet of to-morrow, then, should be a metaphysician. Opponents of the idea will argue that poets of old needed no metaphysics. I would reply that the turmoil, the deplorable muddle in the personal lives of many of them (Shelley, Byron, Rossetti, Francis Thompson, Blake, Chatterton, to mention a few names at random), with the consequent distress they suffered and inflicted upon those in their immediate circle, bear witness to the result of lack of harmony in the poetic soul. There is no need to fear that discipline of the mind will result in loss of poetic power. In some cases development may be late but, producing order from chaos, will ensure to the work achieved that depth of thought, emotion and experience, that echo of divine harmony and still small voice of prophecy which we recognize in the great poets of all time.

F. E. SLADE, the author of the Sordello article, amplifies the subject of Mr. Sansom's "Beauty Vanishes" leader: IMPERMANENT OR ETERNAL?

There has probably been no subject so generally written of, throughout the literature of the world, as the impermanence of beauty. Poets, artists, and philosophers alike have lamented over the rapid decay of the beautiful things of this world; the rose blooms but for a day, and then its petals strew the ground, and the rose is no more; the glory of the sunset flames but for a few minutes, before the ashen grey of approaching night supersedes it; the freshness of spring so soon merges into the maturity of summer and the decay of autumn, and it is winter which puts an end to the yearly pageant of manifested beauty.

So too with human life; youth and prime pass so quickly into sere old age, and the phantom Death stretches out its grisly hand to snatch away into the limbo of forgotten things the life which has been beautiful, but seemingly purposeless.

Superficially, of course, there is perpetual reason for this lament; the rose does bloom but for a day; the sunset turns to grey before our ravished eyes; and our loved ones are taken from us.

But it must be realized that, to appreciate beauty to the full, one must let the fugitive individual beautiful things pass, and grasp instead at generalities. One rose is only an infinitesimal manifestation of the great Idea of the rose, and that one rose having flaunted its charms for its brief day, millions of others bloom every year, and will

continue to do so to the end of Time. Even then, the idea labelled "Rose" in the mind of the Creator can never be destroyed, or even decay.

Similarly, the great Idea of Beauty is an essential and eternal part of the eternal Creator, who is Creator eternally, and not only at the beginning of this world. Whether the world evolved through millions of years, or whether it was miraculously created at a word, matters not. It sprang to birth in and from the mind of God, and Time being but a relative thing, appreciable only by human minds, the world is still just as much in and of the mind of God as ever it was.

Consequently, then, the title of Clive Sansom's article in THE POETRY REVIEW is patently untrue. The lament of the ages that "Beauty vanishes, beauty passes" is the product of blind searching for the Truth of eternity.

Truly, the veil before the human mind is a thick one. The poets, artists, and philosophers have always felt that Beauty should be imperishable, but they have failed to see that it essentially is so. Time, like fire, is a good servant, but a bad master; and the seer should begin to realize that Time is merely relative, and very mundane, and is not an essential constituent of the whole cosmic scheme at all. Rather it should be realized that we, the most insignificant of us, live much more really in the cosmos than in the world, which is a fraction of the cosmos; and the cosmos is an Idea in the mind of the Creator.

From this point of view, then, the poet and seer can derive an infinitude of inspiration which will wipe away for ever the tears of lament for the impermanence of Beauty. They can already perceive the intensity which underlies and is the spirit of all beautiful things, and it is that intense spirituality which argues the eternal character of beauty. The great masters of literature have written superlatively of the beauty which they saw; but it is time now for the poet of everlastingness to arise fresh with inspiration, to lead the men of the world out of the world.

The author of "Beauty vanishes, beauty passes" touches truth at the end of his article, when he speaks of the religious poet's solution of the problem of impermanence; "man dies, and beauty dies, but the spirit of both is eternal." But there is more in it than that.

Scientifically speaking, all Ideas are vibrations which are indestructible. There is an old axiom that matter is indestructible, and that is true spiritually as well as chemically. Therefore death implies not an end, but a change, a resolution into spiritual elements which are essentially purer and more refined than the material ones.

Beauty then lives for ever, and it is for the seer, whether poet or philosopher, to seek his inspiration at the source, and not only among things merely relative.

ELIZABETH WILD of CALIFORNIA examines THE LURE OF THE LYRIC:

In his valuable book, *The Poetry of Life*, Bliss Carmen points out

that all the fine arts were a matter of development from some primitive nucleus, in the maze of man's needs or tastes; he calls it the "free play of the human spirit, as it went about its work in the world and became a natural vehicle for giving expression to all man's aspirations and thoughts about life." He defines *art* as "that lovely corporeal body with which man endows the spirit of goodness and the thought of truth." He further disposes of the modus operandi governing the art, in the envoi to his last volume: "Success is in the silence, tho' fame is in the song."

Professor Arthur Quiller-Couch, for twenty years in the Chair of English Literature in Cambridge University, says: "Man has a native impulse and attraction and yearning to merge himself with the universal harmony and become one with it. Between the harmonious universe and the inward soul, are granted to live among us, certain men whose minds and souls have more delicate filaments than ours—vibrating to messages which they bring home to report them to us; and these men we call prophets, poets and artists, and, when they write, we call their report 'literature'."

It is clear that, in the production and perpetuation of good literature there are both operation and co-operation, the writer and the reader; and the discerning mind recognizes that the responsibility of securing good literature rests quite equally with both. Anyone who opens his mind to receive life's highest message, knows that every human thought is a drama and every human activity, as we meet a new day, an adventure. If these be recorded faithfully, with an eye ever to truth, beauty and harmony, the seed is already sown for a harvest of good literature—both in prose and in poetry.

Now, having recognized Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's definition of literature, as an art, we further recognize that literature has two broad divisions—prose forms and poetry—and both are bound by certain laws to be included in the category of literature as an art; prose—to be real literature—must be faithful to the dictates of some mother-tongue. For instance, while the solecism and barbarism may be admitted into the vocabulary of the puppets of the branch of prose called fiction, in order to make clear the standards of some time and place, they must not be used by the author in his development of his theme; while even grossness may come out of the mouths of certain characters made use of in the story, no grossness must appear in the telling of the story. An author must do no violence to his mother-tongue.

Of the two broad form-divisions of literature, Poetry admits of the highest art. And this brings us to the enigmatical query "What is Poetry?" As all true art is generally recognized as a mimic-creation, then, poetry as art, must from syllogitic reasoning, be the interpretation of the various phases of human life. But, quoting again from Bliss Carmen's work *The Poetry of Life;* "To communicate our feelings, to transmit knowledge, to create a mimic world with imaginative

shapes of beauty—these were fundamental cravings, lurking deep in the spirit of man, and demanding manifestation and satisfaction almost as imperiously as do the needs of the body. And since the fine arts are so truly a creation of man, we may expect to find in them a trustworthy image of himself. The poetry of life is the poetry of beauty, sincerity and elation."

But, poetry, badly done or lacking in some of the elements that make it true poetry, is no more art or literature than any other *smattering* at art is true Art.

Lyman Abbott said, in his preface to *The World's Best Poetry*, that "the poet must *feel the truth*, or he is no poet; but he must also have power to express what he feels, in such forms as will create a similar feeling in his readers, or he is still no poet." Then, again, he mentions that "sometimes the *feeling* of the writer is excellent—poetically judged—but the expression is faulty. The poetical utterances of these inarticulate poets are sometimes whimsical—but, oftener, pathetic." And then this great author and editor remarks that sometimes they are like the prattle of little children who exercise their vocal organs, before they have anything to say. The attitude of a great editor in his hopeful approach toward our early crude linguistic efforts with our sensitive revolt against criticism, must be something like that of the pioneer farm-lady in story who wished to make pets of all her animals, until she came to the pig—when she meditates: "Mail-armored; but what can one do with an animal one has to pet with a *shovel*?"

So, in the writing of real poetry, there are both the calm and the charybdis to avoid, and the true work of art must not (in Hamlet's words) "be overdone or come tardy off." But, granting that absolute perfection in human achievement is impossible, we rejoice that so many of the world's poets have "followed their star" until they have arrived at a "glorious haven."

We are considering especially, the lyric form of poetry, which is by far the most widely known, the most favourably known and the most widely understood; perhaps because it has to do with man's inner feelings. It differs, in this particular, from the Epic and the Dramatic poem which deal with outside events. Of all poetic forms, the lyric has the widest scope of action and has no preferred form of metre as does the Great Epic. The sub-divisions of the Lyric do, however have each, certain characteristics which distinguish them from one another. The division simply called the Song, is self-explanatory, and is the simplest form of lyric expression. The Song may embody any subject, and though simple, is never trivial. Wordsworth's "Daffodils," Tennyson's Song, "Sweet and Low," two of the simplest lyrics yet deal with great depth of feeling, of wide human experience—even hint at tragedy.

The Ode expresses some intense feeling and is more intricate in form than the Song. Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," and Sir Wm. Jones' "What Constitute a State?" are examples.

The Elegy expresses grief or reflection, Milton's " Lycidas," Grey's " Elegy in a Country Churchyard."

The Sonnet is a lyric in fixed form, limited to fourteen lines.

Dramatic Lyric vividly suggests human action. Browning made a speciality of this form. " How We Brought the Good News from Ghent," is a good example of this.

The Lyric is the *compelling* poem. We cannot forget certain truths or facts, offered to us in the lyric, even if we try. If anyone entertains a doubt of this statement, he only needs to revert to certain verses that were presented to his early mental adventures—such as Wordsworth's " Lucy Grey " or Hood's " Eugene Aram " or, it may have been Mrs. Heman's " Landing of the Pilgrims," which contained certain strains that wove themselves into his very mental fibre—never to be forgotten. Any one of these selections might have been paraphrased—and the same items of information set forth in the most graphic and convincing prose—but, it is safe to speculate that the story they would have made in such a form would have found some means of escape from the reader's adult memory. The story of Lucy Grey would have been admitted, no doubt, to be very pathetic; a brave little girl who, coming from school, finds her father busy about the farm and her mother not yet returned from market. A storm has set in and still the mother does not come. Darkness is falling and the father (who no doubt has the lambs and calves to protect from the storm) suggests that Lucy " take a lantern to light her mother through the snow." We read how the dutiful Lucy, in the lyric, started out, reached the narrow bridge, formed by a plank and, after we read how her footsteps were afterwards traced " into the middle of the plank—and, further, there were none," how our youthful minds pondered the phrase " and further there were none." It may have been our first feat of real reasoning; for, after we read that the sweet face of Lucy Grey would never more be seen, we knew that that line held the key to the girl's sad destiny.

Bulwer Lytton wrote a novel based on the case of Eugene Aram and introduced the element of romance—trying to extenuate the action of the unhappy, poverty-stricken usher—but the novel was soon forgotten, and our minds do not revert to the real Eugene Aram, who, the law-records of England still show, was convicted of murder and paid the penalty. (There is also, we are told, certain testimony that a belated legacy came just too late to save him from a felon's cell.) But, it is the " Eugene Aram " of the lyric—with its tragic lure that stays in the memory, with its fateful closing lines:

" That night, two men set out from Lynn,
And Eugene Aram walked between,
With gyves upon his wrists."

There is another class of lyrics which hold us, in spite of ourselves: lyrics which are faulty, in some particular—but excellent in some other

aspects of their production. (These poems *of moods*, because of being of personal appeal instead of universal, are not apt to be a poet's greatest work.) Thackeray's "White Squall" is one of these. This poem is, presumably, the true account of Thackeray's trip across the Atlantic when he was coming to pave the way for "The Virginians." Throughout the poem, he breaks a good many laws of versification, says some unsavoury things of the poor Greeks and Jews in the steerage of the ship—but, finally ends the poem with a stanza that, in part, redeems it:

"And, when, its force expended,
The harmless storm was ended
And, as the sunrise splendid,
Came blushing o'er the sea—
I thought, as day was breaking
My little girls were waking,
And smiling, and making
A prayer, at home for me."

In this category, we might also place Oliver Wendell Holmes' "The Last Leaf." The opening stanzas, a little faulty in versification, are saved by the closing one—sweet in repentant sentiment and perfect in meter and rhyme:

"And, if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree,
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old, forsaken bough,
Where I cling."

Again, our modernist poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, has written such a lyric and found it admitted to the pages of literature for the reason that she has written better poems. The poem is paradoxically entitled "The Penitent."

Vachel Lindsay, another modern poet, gives a little gem of childish lore, in the true lyrical form, which he calls "What the Little Girl Said":

"The moon is the North Wind's cooky.
He bites it, day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker.
He kneads clouds, in his den,
And bakes a crisp new moon—the greedy
North Wind eats again!"

And now for some of the lyrics that are "lyrics" indeed, read: "Hymn to Mount Blanc" (Coleridge), "The Song of the Banjo" (Rudyard Kipling) and "The Finding of the Lyre" (James Russell Lowell).

WALLIS MANSFORD directs attention to TENNYSON : THE POET-SEER :

Alfred Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate, was one of the most illustrious and remarkable Englishman of the nineteenth century, and his long span of life linked him with its early, middle and late periods. Born on August 6th, 1809, though he could recall the Battle of Waterloo, and Byron, then alive, was the favourite poet of his early youth, he yet lived to see the Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

In 1827 a volume of Poems by Frederick and Alfred Tennyson, both in their teens, *Poems of Two Brothers* was published. At Cambridge the Poet met Arthur Hallam, whose close and stimulating friendship helped to inspire his muse, and five years later Tennyson published an additional volume of poetry, but this met with a very unfavourable reception by the reviewers. The only favourable notice that appeared was in the *Monthly Repository*, a Unitarian organ edited by William Johnson Fox, Minister of South Place Chapel, Finsbury. Fox possessed keen insight and knew rising genius when he met with it. It was Fox who gave helpful praise and encouragement to Robert Browning, when he met with similar disheartening treatment at the hands of the reviewers.

Tennyson's 1832 volume was not merely a failure with the British public, it proved a disaster, for it was ten years before he again sought publicity. Thus in his life's springtide, when between 23 and 33 years of age, except for an occasional contribution to an Annual, Tennyson was songless. His literary career was not only severely checked, but the world was poorer for his silence. The 1842 edition of his poems met with a much more favourable reception, and this called for a 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th edition. *The Princess*, published in 1847, further established Tennyson's reputation. This ran to a second edition in 1848 when the songs were added. Later in 1850 Tennyson published his *In Memoriam* :

> " Short swallow flights of song, that dip
> Their wings in tears, and skim away."

In Memoriam found immediate favour with Prince Albert, and on the death of William Wordsworth, in the year of publication, the office of Poet Laureate was offered by Queen Victoria to Tennyson and accepted by him. From that time forward Tennyson's position as a poet of renown could be said to be firmly established.

When in 1883 Tennyson was created a peer, he appreciated the honour done to literature rather than for himself. He exercised his vote in the House of Lords with scrupulous conscientious care, and more than once influenced the Prime Minister of the day to modify some drastic clause in a proposed measure, but above and beyond all the honours he attained to, was the Laureate's wonderful Seership which is apparent to all close students of his poetry. Tennyson once wrote to his son, Hallam :

" A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of

consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve, and fall away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, when death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life."

This he said might be the state which St. Paul describes " Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell."

It was probably in such a trance state that Tennyson composed over a century ago his poem *Locksley Hall*, in which he prophesied the coming of the aeroplane, with its transit of diamonds, and its dropping of bombs, and also the forming of " The League of Nations." The following verses from the poem will illustrate the Laureate's remarkable pre-vision. They were familiar to all Victorians but seem to be unread by the later generation :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the people plunging thro' the thunder storm ;

Till the war drums throbb'd no longer and the battle flags were furl'd,
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the World ! "

On the last occasion that I visited Farringford, in harmony with the prophecy contained in the verses recorded, I was moved to cross to the Isle of Wight by air, an exhilarating and pleasurable experience, and one that tends to helpfully widen one's vision. It is doubtful if there is any other more remarkable instance of a human being seeing into the future with such comprehensive and unerring accuracy the coming of events, which at the time of the birth of the thoughts expressed in " Locksley Hall " were quite beyond the range of likelihood or possibility.

Tennyson was fully conscious of his power of passing into trance when his seer faculties were awakened, and he refers to this in his poem *The Ancient Sage* :

" for more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow world."

We have also the recognition by the Laureate of his seership in his poem *Merlin and the Gleam*. This was composed in Tennyson's

eightieth year, and very happily summarizes the Pilgrimage of his Muse:

"Mighty the wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic."

"I am Merlin
And I am dying
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam."

It was on account of these trance experiences coming upon him, that Tennyson was careful to have available in the grounds of Aldworth and Farringford certain spots reserved for him to retire to, and where it was understood under no circumstances was he to be disturbed, unbroken silence being a requisite to the working of the spell.

Members of the Poetry Society, who visited Aldworth a few years ago may recall that in the grounds certain bowers were set aside for the Laureate's exclusive use, and at Farringford there is a little summer house, reached by a bridge, from which you obtain a delightful glimpse of Freshwater Bay, in which the Laureate composed much of his poetry. When visiting Hallam, Lord Tennyson at Farringford, I saw this picturesque retreat, and can well understand what a boon its sylvan seclusion must have been to the Laureate.

Power is often given to the poet to see beneath the surface of existing things—to trace their beauty and meaning to the source with a clearer insight than the average man, but Tennyson's power of vision in his Seership, far transcended this, for he saw what was non-existent at the time, and undreamt of by his fellow men, and he prophesied the birth of events in the years to be in an unmistakable way, and his pre-vision of things of great importance to humanity, and the world at large, have not only come into existence, but are likely to play an increasing part in the life of the world.

In these days when the commonplace is often given undue importance, Tennyson's poetic work is sometimes spoken of with disparagement, but the consummate excellence of the Laureate's verse combining nobility of conception and beauty of form and rhythm, with a musical quality that captures the heart and the mind of the reader, will ensure that in the words of Stopford Brooke, spoken to an earlier generation: "Tennyson's Poetry will last when all its detractors and their criticisms are together dust!"

MOLLY WALKER DISCUSSES POETRY AND EXPERIENCE:

There is only one valid reason for writing poetry, in a world so flooded with mediocrity as this. If the principal motive for writing (secondary motives must of course be allowed their place) is to make money, to see one's name on the cover of some popular magazine, to get rid of a complex, or even to instruct a misguided world, the result

is not likely to be great literature, however good its technique may be. The only motive behind great literature is the motive of necessity: a real poet writes poetry because he cannot help it. Not all poems will survive on that account, any more than all the million offspring of the herring survive, but at least they have the principle of life in them.

It is difficult to analyse this motive of necessity. In some writers there may be a deep and generous desire to share some unforgettable experience, actual or imagined, with others; or to create something beautiful that all may see. But perhaps the way that at first sight seems more self-centred is really less so: the desire to make permanent some fragment of an experience which is, after all, unique, and precious, and passing. Rupert Brooke had this intense desire, this sense of the value of life, and his poem "Dining-room Tea" is a typical expression of it.

Human experience, like human consciousness, is a threefold thing. Body, mind and spirit have each their part to play, and the finest music comes when all three move in harmony. Life is not just a tune with an accompaniment, but a piece of counterpoint, in which the theme is taken up by first one voice and then another, while the compass of each is flexible, not rigid.

Physical experience, which is limited for most of us by circumstance, is of slight importance taken by itself. One of the fallacies of the moment is that we must go everywhere, see everything, and do everything, to know about "Life." Yet we have all met people who have been right round the world, apparently seeing nothing that they could not have seen at home. Those of us who are obliged to live in a backwater, are forced to a disturbing conclusion: "Life," it seems, is all round us, and what we see of it depends on how we use our eyes.

The experience of the mind, which includes most of our imaginative experience, is more under our control. We can enrich it by reading, by conversation with intelligent people, and by thought most of all. It is by thought that we assimilate the ideas of other people and make them our own. As someone points out, when a gardener feeds his sweet peas with sulphate of ammonia, he does not expect them to produce more sulphate of ammonia; he expects better sweet peas.

Then we come to the experience of the spirit, which is the beginning and end of all human experience, for it goes deeper than the most primitive bodily instincts, and rises far above the highest flights of the mind. This is not quite the same thing as religious experience, for it exists in people who have no conscious religious sense at all. It seems to be the birthright of every human creature, whether he tries to express it or not; but to those who believe in God it is the stuff of which religion is made. One cannot define it. There is an illustration of it in the comparison between Shelley's lovely poem "To Night," and a poem by Henry Vaughan with a similar title, "The Night." After Shelley's invocation;

" Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight! "

—Vaughan's work may seem a little crude in comparison. But when one turns back to Shelley again, his Spirit of Night is just a charming fancy, while Vaughan's less perfect lines are based on a fact of spiritual experience :—

" There is in God—some say—
A deep, but dazzling darkness; as men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear.
O for that Night! where I in Him
Might live invisible and dim! "

This is a comparison between poems, not between their authors; in *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley's spiritual experience comes very near that of a greater poet still, whom we know as Isaiah.

The poet whose work survives, however, is not always the man with the richest experience. It is he who, having an experience worth sharing, can tell it in the right words, and so enable us to share it. Lascelles Abercrombie, in *The Idea of Great Poetry*, says that any good translation of Dante can tell the reader what Dante saw, but only Dante's actual words can make him see it. That is why it is really impossible to translate good poetry—the best way is to give the sense of the words, and provide the reader with the original. Second-rate poetry, of course, may be improved by translation, for the translator may choose better words than the author.

Poetry and experience : it is a fact that poetry actually does come first. Most of us read, and try to write, poetry long before we have had any experience worth recording. Even after years of practice we find that our failures are often failures of expression; and it is amusing to find sometimes that when we have just strung some pleasant words together, we are credited with a profound meaning that never came into our heads. As this search for the right word (not necessarily a new or striking word) is so difficult and so essential, it is good to practise writing even when we are not inspired—though we need not inflict our exercises on a long-suffering world. We must learn our craft, so that when the great moment of experience comes, we may be ready for it.

Shakespeare fed his mind on the work of lesser men; and if our words can enrich the experience of some great artist of the future, we shall not have written in vain.

PROLEGOMENA TO THE LOGIC OF POETRY:

[TERENCE WHITE (Fellow of the Philosophical Society of England), provides a very interesting and learned paper. But I cannot help wondering whether this close analysis helps or discourages the creative poet. After all, these processes are in great part subconscious in the poet.

All the illustrations are illuminating and, I think, particularly that quoted from Milton. No doubt, these "sound-schemes" or harmonies came easily to Milton, just as music comes to a great composer. One can imagine him, perhaps, as labouring to revise and perfect his work so that error and awkwardness should be deleted (for he was human) but hardly as *labouring* to *create* his "sound schemes," because the forms of English running in his mind were already harmonious from long use and practice. I do not find convincing the idea that qualitative change *always* follows quantitative. What if the verse had run "Our *God*——"?—ED.]

The Logic of Poetry is best illustrated, first by examples, secondly by the evidence of laws and existences arising from or suggested by the examples.

Charles Williams, in his *English Poetic Mind*, writes appositely: "The 6th and 7th stanzas of Keat's Nightingale Ode are philosophical change known by the poetic mind—the movement is announced, in so many words, to be a *poetic* unit—The night—the moon, and stars —no moon, no stars—'enbalmed darkness'—'darkling I listen'—'easeful Death'—'rich to die.'"

Other examples of the logic of poetry are to be seen in the management of single words, that substitution of words which is the poet's last inspiration, crescendo-effects (i.e., effects of continuity and intensity), contrast, emphasis, repetition, variety, sound and sense—all of which applies especially to mathematical functions.

Consider the following lines from my *Christmas-Contemplation*, an instance of rapid combinations of verbal, spiritual, and technical ascents and crescendi:

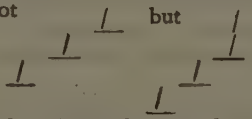
> "But the word lives in the high hills,
> And in the stars that are higher than hills,
> And in the Child who is higher than the stars."

In this there is an obvious attempt at two distinct ascents of contrast —"word," "stars," and "(high) hills," "higher than hills," "higher than *the* stars." The first set of contrasts is transitive not connective, while the second is both. In between these two sets lies a subsidiary ascent, rising from the concealed relative clause in the epithet "high," through the common relative pronoun "that," to the aristocratic "who" in the last line.

All three sets are fairly normal in structure and progress, the second being remarkable for an effective tension in the repetition in the third line of the "higher" of the second, whereby the ear and mind are

struck wondering, the tension being relieved by the antithesis of "hills" and "the stars." But this antithesis is effected at least as much by the word "stars" as by "the"; here symbolic being and its logical communities can show how a comparatively unimportant word (and thus, *mutatis mutandis*, a thing) can receive light from a word following it, can also illuminate that word itself, and yet in the very self-annihilating act of illumination merge itself into the greater word, so that its own effect shines by a double reflection, that of its own past shining and that of the shining of the absorbing, greater word.

At the same time there is a frustrated ascent from "But" to "And" and "And": the mere repetition of two units (in this case, words) need not, of course, imply frustration, for frequently an adjacent unit magnetizes one of the static units to its own impetus. Here, however, the progression is not



but

A final example of tension and crescendo will be seen in a passage from the first book of my *Towards the Sun*:

"... No knocking can unveil what lies behind:
O! God, Lord God, Sabaoth God, Man's God,
Our Christ, grant me one ray, one sight of Thee,
The hem of Thy garment and Thy charmed Hands."

Here there are many different lengths of logical units. Consider first the "><" effect in the first line of the two dipthongs in "unveil-lies," then see how the i- of "behind" is matured (and also caught up contrapuntally with two other streams of crescendo) in the — — of "Man's God," which is in the same metrical position in the next line. After "behind" a mental pause takes place, connection between "behind" and "O! God" being given by the fact that both "ī" and "ō" are open kindred sounds, and by the pronounced "d" at the end of both words. In the crescendo of the second line, note (*a*) the existence of a base, i.e., the word "God," (*b*) the variations of function, index, coefficient, division (i.e., interjection, noun, Hebrew phrase, possessive case) placed over this base, culminating in the qualitative change which always follows quantitive, in "Our *Christ*." The transition from "Lord" and "Sabaoth" to "Man's," and thence to "our" (qualitative + qualitative (quantitative)) is worth noting; we have thus two qualitative changes, but placed thus

$$\frac{1, 2}{1, (2)}.$$

Poetry illustrates also the dynamic law of a whole made up of a part and a whole, e.g., in my lines:

"And London winds seem swept
Into an invisible *grandeur and whole*."

Here, according to static logic, the whole would include the grandeur, so that the phrase becomes redundant and verbose.

Metre and rhyme provide super-abundant instances of logic: short and long lines correlated by a common rhyme, unrhymed verse correlated by metre, and finally the double verse of combined rhyme and metre. All Milton provides instances of these three forms. A remarkable instance of rhythm associated with a simple sound-scheme from a different starting-point (*Paradise Lost*, V, 169-70) is given:

> " *praise* him in *thy Sphere*
> *while Day* arises, that *sweet* hour of *prime* ",

where the constructive pattern of the underlined vowels is 1232 1223, and it is significant that these two equal halves overlap the metrical scheme of the lines.

An instance of static-logical " contradiction " in Milton's poetry:

> " Within the visible Diurnal Sphere "

(*Paradise Lost*, VII, 22.)

In this line, " visible " gives a sense of the mortality and insufficient splendour of earthly things, while the two last words, by reason of their broad vowel-sounds, suggest that even earth has its infused grandeur. Earth and not-earth, A and not-A ;* Earth and infused heaven, A and A + B.*

Finally, the question of emphasis and repetition: poetry uses many methods, some direct, some indirect, to obtain emphasis and repetition. (Of course, one can have emphasis without repetition or *vice versa*.) Consider Shelley's very subtle

> " Wherefore hast thou left me now
> *Many a day and night* ? (x + y)
> *Many* a weary *night* and day (y + x)
> 'Tis since thou art fled away."

Two less-observed points in the logic of this well-known stanza are, the insertion of " weary," and the echo of " now " (first line) in " thou " (last line).

To come to the simpler units ; poetry, according to (i) the prevailing emotional tone, (ii) the surrounding vowels and consonants, (iii) the presence or absence of similar tones or words, (iv) the presence or absence of remarkable or picturesque words close by, can lengthen or shorten, emphasize or subdue, the mental size of the same word in various contexts. Syllables and mere sounds, and lastly letters, the atom of verse, supply instances of all the implications of the New Logic,† and enhance our conception of the nature of Tautology, Progression, Curve, Contradiction, the Meeting of different Planes, connection, and many other logical subjects.

* These are representative formulae of the new, " dynamic " Logic, erected for modern needs and positions, which is the subject-matter of the second chapter of my book, *Nova Suna*, of which the present essay is an extract.

† I intend to make a detailed study soon in a book to be called *The Sixth Æneid analyzed as Poetic Logic*.

EVENSONG

WHEN we are old and sunset's last gold hair
Is all the light for those few hours we have,
The tide of peace drawn on to fuller flood
Than ever in the stretches of the day,
Then, hand in quiet hand, still as evening smoke,
Serenely will we turn;
And, gazing from the silence on the hill
Whose crown with sunset we have nearly won,
Beyond our lingering shadows in the dusk
See how the long white way of our one life
From the far morning climbed, a changeful road,
By summer-lilied lakes, by singing streams,
By purple moorlands swooning into mist
That veiled us in the grey hair of old gods,
By burning lands of rock where no shade hung,
But never losing sound of some great sea
Whose faint voice moaned eternal in our ears;
And climbed, we guessing not, for ever near
The salt-breathed margin of that unseen shore,
Until upon this never-conquered hill
So near the crest day's last few hours fade.
Remember then
Draughts joyous drunk from thousand loaded flowers
Seemed once to hold all beauty in the earth,
More beauty than the worship of one star,—
Till you were led to me;
For in your heart unwound the single road
Whereon to inmost beauty I could walk,
And loveliness
Grew dim beside this worship of one star,
And I knew then the Gates of Silence near
Where through the long white way of our one life
Leads where the Silence, that is God's Own Heart,
Lends us eternal and inviolate healing.
Ah yes, my dear, when we are old and still,
When only sunset's lingering gleams are left,
The long road done,
And peace of mountain silences upon us,
We will turn back and gaze along the road
Where now we walk so valiant with our dreams,
But knowing yet beneath the joyous morning
The Gates of Silence give us more than all:
Am I come home to rest upon thy bosom,

Into thine heart to sink and homeward nestle,
Thee, and thy child.
Mother the evening nears, and calls, the day is dying,
Long after noon the angelus rings again;
I shall not kiss thee more, thy lips nor breast nor temples,
For ecstasy flaming to the passionate Heaven,
Ecstasy mounting as the voiceful Ocean,
Passes on high into the living Silence:
Thine heart and mine are one thou blessed Mother!
Behold, I wait the coming of the dark!

R. H. Malloch.

GHOSTLY WARNING

("... if it be not true, then let me die."
Marlowe, *Jew of Malta.*)

A SPIRIT walks in these fields.
Circlewise, in ghost-light,
Noiseless skirts dragging on grass,
Night after weary night,
While earthly seasons pass
She must for ever go
In timeless woe.

A Traitor buried here
Upright, his lips to earth—
Thirst-mad lips, blacker than sod—
Watched night by night in fear
For one dearer than God.
Dew-drenched hems brought for his dearth
Water enough; Death snarled away
For one more day.

Had she but loved him, she had let him die
Nor sought to lengthen out his time; but she,
Loving him not, prolonged his agony.
Yet now he rests, while she must ever waken,
And walk, and weep.
Dear Love, you who bring life in sips to me,
Let die that love you have in truth forsaken;
For I shall sleep
As does that traitor—but your soul will go
Wandering about the world, in timeless woe.

Morwyth Rees.

AN OLD MAN AND A YOUNG MAIDEN

T. S. Eliot : *East Coker* (Faber and Faber, 1s.).

Marie C. Stopes : *Oriri* (Heinemann, 3s. 6d.).

As the times change the great rebels are left behind as great people until eventually they become part of the past. The Wordsworth of the Revolution whose movements were once followed by a government spy ended life as the grand old man of English poetry ; healers like Pasteur, who were openly laughed at, have died so revered that at their deaths one might almost say of them as Motley said of William the Silent that " the little children cried in the streets." Both T. S. Eliot and Marie Stopes have passed through the stage of rebellion to that of greatness and are already merged in that wild, decadent, progressive and ineffective past between two European wars, a past which they each endeavoured to change. Both have been opposed by that large class of people which wears knowledge as other men do a cloak and keeps on that same knowledge or that same cloak until it is threadbare and out of fashion, the class satirized by Stopes as the Roman Catholic priest in *Our Ostriches*, or by Eliot as part and parcel of "that Shakespeherian Rag" which so amused them in *The Waste Land.* To these people new things in thought or culture are a disease and Eliot with his endeavour to portray in poetry a deeper mental state, with his slings and arrows at the outrageous fortune of the age, and Stopes claiming a free life for man and woman based upon the perfect love made possible by birth control, were both held to be symptoms of this disease. Yet in the end they have won. Eliot has been succeeded by a new generation of poets who claim him as their master and he sees to-day (" unreal cities " do you remember ?) London's towers falling down as he alone amid the gay riot of the nineteen-twenties had the perception to fear. And Marie Stopes, returning to poetry, puts into *Oriri* all that she has claimed as the rightful accompaniment to natural existence.

In *East Coker* and *Oriri* are the final words of these two people who have endeavoured to put right some of the wrongness of modern life. Stopes makes love the key to all happiness, Eliot has come to lose faith in everything except religion. Thus *Oriri* is the dream poem of a young maiden, *East Coker* contains the reflections and philosophy of an old man in which the dripping blood and the bloody flesh are our only food and :

" What you do not know is the only thing you know."

But Stopes would say : " God must do *our* will."

Eliot's poem is on the whole one of disillusionment. The promises of youth have not held; and old age has not brought happiness. He asks himself:

"What is the late November doing
With the disturbance of the spring?"

and there is no answer, no connection. The splendid young men and women have gone, the great ideals and aspirations flown away, and all that is left in their place is the crowd of captains, merchant bankers, statesmen, civil servants, chairmen of committees and petty contractors. And soon, with the certainty of the hatchet falling in the nursery rhyme "Oranges and Lemons":

"O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark."

So Eliot queries:

"What was to be the value of the long looked forward to,
Long looked for calm, the autumnal serenity,
And the wisdom of age?"

The wisdom, it appears, is no more than the knowledge of dead secrets while the knowledge derived from experience has only a limited value.

"We are only undeceived
Of that which, deceiving, could no longer harm.
In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure foothold,
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
Risking enchantment."

The only wisdom finally is the wisdom of humility, to be humble before God, to accept an unknown destiny, to "be still and wait without hope." Others without this courage of waiting wander aimlessly through life, clutch at the bright prizes and are annoyed to lose them, die sorrowful, curse fate.

"And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about."

All real happiness is in the losing of life and in resignation. For:

"the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting."

As to the active life that even the truly resigned man must lead one can only strive towards the good and hope that it may be obtained; if one fails the endeavour will have been enough.

"There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

So what appear to be the great or the small things of life have their destined times and these times only. There is a time for love and afterwards love must die and be forgotten.

"There is a time for the evening under starlight
And a time for the evening under lamplight."

And I or anyone can remember these evenings and wonder in war-time whether they may re-occur, the friends or the lovers return. So also :

" There is a time for building
And a time for living and for generation
And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
And to shake the wainscot where the field mouse trots
And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto."

All these times are transitory, have their periods only, do not make part of the great life which is a waiting for something unknown and for something greater, not found possibly until everything else is mirth under the earth, flesh nourishing the corn.

Yet some perhaps may find the key to living in life itself or rather in love which can alone make life vital and a thing to be enjoyed. Marie Stopes in *Oriri* would to this extent contradict Eliot.

" Uncurbed must be the impulse and the joy
True man must choose his own life or it fails
Must weave his own fate gladly or destroy
Its beauty's pattern."

The Earth to which this speech is attributed is warm and generous, not the cold earth of Eliot waiting to cloy or soil, waiting like a wizard finally to bury its children and give them peace again. The earth and elements of nature are in *Oriri* ready to welcome humanity, not to be their adversaries, or at the best aloof neutrals watching mankind tread an allotted path to a mysterious or holy end. And as to a hidden future beckoning almost magically it is in *Oriri* Love :

" whose lovely eyes
Alone see future beauties in the skies."

Oriri is a poem about the love of a man and a woman whose meeting at last discovers that happiness that Eliot in his life seems to have lacked, which is the summit and end-all of the true life. Thus the Trees sing in their chorus :

" Our green foam surges up toward the cloud,
We stoop toward the earth so low and sweet,
Vibrating through our fibres time is fetched
From all the past down glittering alley ways.
Breathless we listen for the love we lack.
The moment Time awaits is opening now !
The sun-emblazoned chestnut on his brow
Held by that dart-straight wand his slender back
Shines in the sun that lights his smiling gaze.
So when he comes towards her, hand outstretched
High in the heavens they stand, while at their feet
The earth rolls gleaming through a cloak of cloud."

So this almost Elizabethan tale of love continues. The two meet and are united. The night rolls on. At last the morning comes. She awakens first and cries :

" How penetrating is your youth thus clothed in sleep !
Your burnished hair tossed into rippling waves
Your lidded luminous eyes fringed with deep dreams.
The tender quiver of your parted lips
Draws your soft breath into a pearléd cave.
The light-flecked, sun-resisting glow of leaves
Curtains your forehead, but a breeze slips in
To lift and gild a lock of love-kissed hair.
You cannot see how bright your sudden smile
Makes truth alighting in your lucent gaze.
Centring upon a crystal instant while
Your look enhances amber pressed from time.
You people all my world, now in a thousand guises
Your face in light and shadow and your hands in work and rest.
You stir ! Your flickering eyelids open suddenly
Your eyes double the sun. Your hands flung upwards
Shine golden in its light."

Here is the full or shared life as distinct from that of the solitary. Life is either lived within oneself like that of Eliot or it is lived between two ; it cannot be spread abroad. The public life of dinner-party brilliance and bright apparent success is the great farce ; it is the life of those who have many acquaintances and no friends, many mistresses and no lover. If one can, one should share ; if one cannot, then one can only live privately within oneself. Housman is the example of the man who tried to share and could not. Auden describes him :

" Heart injured in London he became
The leading classic of his generation."

Eliot in *East Coker* finds the way out from this predicament. And even Stopes, claiming for everyone a supreme love that lasts for always could provide no more satisfactory solution for the disappointed.

But Stopes considers only the shared life. Her lovers :

" bend towards each other like the willow
Towards its counterpart in mirrored lake
And there as softly, on the surface, kiss."

And she cries later to Him :

" Light as a rose-leaf pressure yours upon me
Now with your rose-tipped form you seek caress
Canopied with your grace I swoon beneath you
Sweet as the linden scent your dear outpourings."

Here is the brave new love of true lovers on which the successful future of mankind must be based. God is at the service of these lovers ; he is not the cold and mysterious god of Eliot's. One recollects the difficulties of Abelard and Heloise in choosing between the two of the fine passage in a Renaissance poem in which a maiden prefers to brave Hell where true lovers go, rather than strive for

heaven in company with dull friars and priests. The shared life is the more perfect life, though the solitary man may lead the greater existence, at the same time the more mysterious, perhaps uglier existence.

To Marie Stopes the end of destiny is to love and the fates of lovers drive them together. She would cry :

> " Predestined you alone in silence conquered
> All that the eager-voiced had sworn to win."

And in the prayer at the end of her poem she says : " Grant power to our wills when we will that human life, instead of fading prematurely in misery and loneliness may with ever-deepening wisdom attain the understanding of growth as a flower in beauty and peace." For the individual there is the choice between this and the way of life of the man who cries :

> " We must be still and still moving
> Into another intensity
> For a further union, a deeper communion
> Through the dark cold and the empty desolation.
> The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
> Of the petrel and the porpoise."

Somehow it should be possible to combine the two deities, the private god and the god of love, private philosophy and personal affection. But it has not yet been done. And the man who lives inside himself and endeavours to love outside himself will be melancholy and wear a mask. Unhappily he stretches between two worlds and whichever one he may happen at any moment to touch will not be the one he wants. For every joy he may win will bear its own regret and every regret may itself be a joy that so much was recovered, so much overcome. No one need envy this man.

JOHN WALLER

" The Poems of Alice Meynell " have been the subject several times of examination and appreciation in THE POETRY REVIEW so that we need do no more now than welcome their appearance in an Oxford edition (222 pp., 4s.). They may raise doubts now as to the validity of Mr. Garvin's fervent nomination of Mrs. Meynell for the Laureateship thirty years ago, but we can still take delight in the development of her lyrics from melody to a deeper intellectuality. Those earlier poems established her reputation; William Sharp declared of *Renouncement* : " I know of no nobler or more beautiful sonnet " when Rossetti (who knew it by heart) added it was one of the three finest sonnets ever written by women. Earlier still Ruskin wrote, " The last verse of that perfectly heavenly *Letter of a Girl to her own Old Age*, the whole of *San Lorenzo's Mother* and the end of the sonnet *To a Daisy* are the finest things I have yet seen or felt in modern verse." Would our modernists agree with these enthusiastic judgments or endorse Francis Thompson's opinion twenty years later which seems to apply to contemporary conditions, " It is poetry, the spiritual voice of which will become

audible when the ' high noises ' of to-day have followed the feet that made them " ?

The real poet's precision of characterization and exactitude of phrase give distinction and clarity to *Sergeant Lamb of the Ninth* (Methuen, 8s. 6d.) as they did to the distinguished *Claudius* volumes. The Dublin soldier's straightforward, convincing narrative is chiefly concerned with the blundering American War of 1775–83. We feel that it is he and not Mr. Robert Graves who describes a chequered campaign and has intimate vital associations with the great-hearted Captain Brant (Thayendanegae, the Mohican war-chief, the great man of (thanks to him) our native allies the Six Iroquois Nations)—an epic story.

The Rev. T. Pittaway, M.A., Rector of Rodden, has published two long narrative poems, *Abraham* and *Joseph* (2s. 6d. each) which establish him as the successor of the Rev. Alan Brockington. They are skilful reconstructions, with individual enlargements and glosses, of two well-known biographies, and not the tiresome versified paraphrases we are frequently offered. Mr. Pittaway has his own diction and imagery effectively controlled and handled. His technical skill has been developed to a remarkable degree during the years he has been associated with THE POETRY REVIEW. As his occasional short poems have shown, his religious verse, as now, sober and scholarly, is never trite and dull and unimaginative. We cannot dissect the admirable descriptions and characterisations involved in Abraham's " hundred years of pilgrim life " during which he proved that

" Affinity of spirit is a tie
Fast wrought by God for all eternity,"

and the terse episodes of Joseph's colourful story, a companion pilgrimage to that of Abraham's, continued after death by Moses carrying on his bones till

" Shechem has his tomb,
And Paradise provides his palace room,"

—they should be read personally and even publicly in days with ample scope and need for thoughtful, uncorrupted, sincere poetic expression.

Hearts and Pomegranates, the autobiography of Dame Katharine Furse—" Diana of the Uplands "—(Peter Davis, 15s.) has a special interest at the moment and for us because of the intimate picture of the life at Davos and elsewhere of John Addington Symonds, the centenary of whose birth in Bristol occurred last month. This highly distinguished poet and aesthetic critic, whose grave near that of Shelley's in Rome we visited not long ago, was the father of Dame Katharine, who gives a fascinating and beautiful account of the family life and contacts. Public business develops when during the last war she was prominently associated with the V.A.D. and the W.R.E.N. establishments with Dame Rachel Crowdy who " had come into my life with the

debonair attitude which all her friends know so well. . . . She also has a cultured side which ensures sympathy with those who care deeply for all that is beautiful, and though hers is expressed through poetry, which remains outside my understanding, the link is strong and fundamental." Dame Rachel very appropriately became a Vice-President of The Poetry Society recently.

The *Testament of Immortality*, an anthology compiled by " N.G." for his own solace after the death of an only son (Faber, 8s. 6d.) is more philosophical than literary although many fine poems are brought forward to reinforce individual faith—heartening evidence from Milton, Blake, Tennyson, Browning, Donne, Victor Hugo, Tagore, Vaughan, J. A. Symonds, R. L. Stevenson, Wordsworth, and other poets, as well as a host of prose writers, turned philosophers and moralists, who have acquired " that lordly utterance as if the God was speaking through his prophets "—messages of hope and affirmation in days of widespread premature mortality.

A lighter subject anthology is *Love's Helicon* (Duckworth, 5s.), in which our incomparable amorous poetry is paraded by John Hayward. Elizabethan and Restoration poets are the leading amorists but Meredith overwhelms them and Yeats and Hardy, who conclude the progress, are the greater realists. Few other modernists are represented : A second collection compiled (like this) irrespective of names would show fewer inhibitions and less devotion to eyebrows. It is a mild observation that " behind " has become lately the King Charles's head of even respectable celebrators of physical attractions.

Our drama library is enriched by the addition of Prof. A. N. Wiley's *Rare Prologues and Epilogues*, 1642–1700 (Allen & Unwin, 15s.), treated for the first time as a literary genre, reprinting accurately and with shrewd observations a large number of these defiant, apologetic, critical, personal, historical theatrical addresses by Dryden, Otway, Shadwell, D'Urfey and less lesser lights of a brilliant period.

Arthur Row writes : It is indeed encouraging for the future well-being of our English tongue that periodically and without effort, through hazard and peril, the publication of *Poetry of To-day* continues to function and to dispatch its volumes as outward bound messengers of friendship to its many expectant readers in both hemispheres. In this quarter's issue (57) Margaret Locherbie Goff gives four poems rich in imaginative beauty, and some distinctive lines are contained in the sonnet sequence of Joyce M. Lloyd. Lillie Reed Zortman, in her three contributions, of which " Patina " is the most remarkable, shows delicate tracery in her work and some good compositions fall from the pens of Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Anne Throop Craig and Elizabeth O'Callaghan West.

Of the masculine contributors the four poems of the Rev. T. Pittaway, " Pre-natal Grace," " Our Substitute," " Ploughing the Sands "

and " My Library Shelves " deserve very high praise, and with their familiar gentle religious philosophy suggest a reflection of earnestness which is all his own. E. B. W. Chappelow in " Lament for Hiddigeigei " (a black, stray cat) envisages an episode of transient but affectionate comradeship in which he dispels the arrogant and unscientific assumption that the souls of animals do not survive. Some very pleasant rhyming is to be found in " In a Surrey Valley " and " Cholmondeley Walk " by Aidan Clarke, and we find a fine meditative sonnet in his " Strangers and Pilgrims." J. Sackville Martin again accords some very good work, and his three beautiful sonnets might well be summarized by quoting the last line of one of them : " Some far-off fragrance of forgotten song." O. L. Holland continues his long line experiment in his interesting translation of Homer's *Odyssey* and H.M. portrays with consummate ease in " The Devil's Bargain " the Mephistophelian meeting of an unfortunate materialist with his All-seeing Master in familiar guise.

Of the war poems I would mention with especial favour " England " by Cassandra Parker, " Somewhere in England " by Irene Brittain Bell, and the four excellent patriotic contributions by F. T. Bratton; and of the poems that are reactions to the war machine " 1940 " by Silvia Prime—her single work of only seven lines—and " Flanders' Fields in Spring " and " Passiontide " by Edith M. Walker.

The poem which I consider to be the greatest contribution to this number is " The Vision " by Irene P. Turner. Told as from the evening of the early world the theme suggests in a wealth of imagining and restrained emotion that in the fashionings of the universe man has often followed false, fatalistic paths of which warfare is assuredly one. This striking poem should be read by all students of unrhyming and irregular verse and might well be an example to them how it is possible for modern forms to achieve a quite beautiful fulfilment. As typical of the poem I quote the following lines :—

> But in the battles, and their sorrow
> All is lost
> And afarwards is only emptiness
> And weariness, and woe,
> And broken things
> And scattered lovely things
> That once the power of man had made,
> Made once in stillness
> And the wonder in himself. . . .

Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth : My congratulations to the Editors for the way Poetry Review and *Poetry of To-day* are carrying on, in spite of the very difficult war conditions to-day. We need *poetry* more than ever to alleviate some of the war strain—it is part of our great inheritance—the things of the spirit—for which we are fighting—" *Where there is no vision the people perish.*"

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : LXXXVII

THE poetry of Isabel Fiske Conant bears the mark of her New England. We find in her new book, *Orange Feather* (Bruce Humphries, Boston, Mass.) a number of good sonnets, such as " Je n'ai vu Carcassonne " :

I never was in London—my desire,
But I have been a captive in its tower.
I have not been to Stratford, Warwickshire,
But I have strolled with sweet Will there, an hour.
In Sherwood I have worn no favourite trail
Nor known the skylark, over Stonehenge rising,
Nor in Avignon heard the nightingale,
But Keats has shared with me its song surprising ;
Shelley has flared on words into the air
Above me with an echo more than sound,
And Carcassonne,—say not I am not there
Although my feet have never trod its ground.
Anchored, imprisoned from the hope of travel
I see the fringe of passing lands unravel.

The pinnacle of many writers' desire fastens itself on the sonnet. Mrs. Conant gives us a good formula :

A sonnet must be greater than its words,
Than Petrarch's Florence, or than Shakespeare's May.
Its octave must surpass the swell and sway
Of the sea-thunder of stampeding herds,
And its sextette must mount, like migrant birds,
With beating wings on Beauty's windy way,
Or blowing breakers, tossing into spray,
Now dominant ; and now, diminished thirds . . .

The sonnet hangs on walls of long ago
And bevels time within its silver shallow,
Its dusky depth ; a field forever fallow,
A meadow of blue shadows on the snow,
Of echoes on the winds of Beauty going . . .
Iambics of the sonnet ; blowing, blowing.

It is interesting to know that Mrs. Conant's lyric, " Under-sea," is hanging in the Under-sea Room of the Marine Wing of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City :

This so-called dark and silent under-sea,
What if its colours throw off sound and song ?
What if this seaweed's waving forestry,
These buoyant forms that swim the depth along,
Were choral as the birds among their branches,
And if these burnished folk that specialize

Beyond our power in their unfathomed ranches,
Find wonder that eludes our ears and eyes ?

A third book from Cecille Zenia Lewis (*Seeds of Growth*, Bruce, Humphries Co.) is welcome. This writer's definition of poetry is :

" Poetry as ever from its anthropomorphic-concept origin to its most attenuated soulful fibres is all of nature within the human soul and all of soul in life's blind alleys."

Some twenty pages in this collection are given over to maxims. They are quaint and expressive ; choosing at random :

" To fear an image is to call it forth."
" Bent trees reveal the way most storms swept."
" In war flags fall ; in peace new banners fly."

Miss Lewis pleased this reviewer very much by dedicating a poem called " True Talent," to her :

A true talent is free like a wild
Duck in flight over woods ;
Like the shimmering gleam over streams
In the still vesper moods.

A true talent's tempestuous way
Gathers clouds ahead—
With the wind and the gale giving zest
In the tempest of dread.

In " Autumn Drear " the reader literally breathes the chill of autumn:

A gray-blue sky moves on and on,
Wind driven hither, thither fast ;
A pallid sun through lurid veils
Of ether silvers gray rain-dust.

The soil is dark in withered green,
The pavements gray with sheen of rain.
The shrivelled leaves are tossed up high,
All rolling windwards, autumn lain.

Author of three volumes of serious poetry and well-known as a short story writer, Dorothy Quick presents her first collection of humorous verse, *Laugh While You Can*, A Book of De-Light Verse (Loker Raley, New York, N.Y.).

It is interesting to note, she is a New Yorker, a member of the Junior League, she spends her summers in East Hampton, L.I., and her short stories have appeared in England and Denmark, as well as in almost all of our own popular magazines. Miss Quick sends us the following paragraph for the REVIEW :

" I think now, more than ever, people need to laugh and that poets have a real mission in these times of chaos—not only to

alleviate the darkness but to help blaze a pathway into the light." She voices an age-old malady in " Viewpoint "—

Once, time when I was with you
Passed quicker than a song;
Now I no longer love you,
Each second seems too long.

Once I thought I loved you;
Now I know I don't.
Once I feared you'd leave me—
Now I fear you *won't*!

Sounding Piquant Verses (Falmouth Publishing House, Portland, Maine), a first book from Eleanor Vinton, is filled with laughter and a recognition of tears. Clyde Fitch, the playwright, once remarked to this reviewer: " A sense of humour makes one blood relative to the ideal." Miss Vinton tells us of her position toward poetry:

> " I have written poetry for many years, chiefly, I suppose, because to live without writing it is unthinkable. There is no other form of expression which gives so much satisfaction to the creative artist. Now, as never before, the world needs poets. A mad world, grossly materialistic, may seem to render futile such an intangible substance as our art, but let us hope that poetry will be undiscouraged, for it has always been in such times as this that great poets have come into being."

Let us read " Family ":

Our laughter cannot be interpreted
By those who have not shared the years with us.
Our tears are hidden from the curious
Who peer and pry when any tears are shed.

The world can never break, though it has tried
To loose, this bond; for down the centuries
Old loves and dreams have come to us, and these
Dear jokes we know, and this sustaining pride.

In *Señor Paco Does Not Return*, by Miriam Crenshaw (J. F. Rowny Press, Santa Barbara), we find sincere appreciation of the beauty of the Old World, and in these days, when so much of it appears about to vanish, it brings a pang to the happy remembrance of days spent in Florence, in Rome, in Paris.

A first stanza from Dante brings us warm remembrance:

Florence would have him now, but he eludes her;
His greatness waxes as her own grows less.
As a mere point in space, his world includes her;
His mighty soul she never can possess.

And on an opposite page, five stanzas take us to St. Peter's, of which we give the first :

Here is a temple rich beyond our dreams
And vast beyond the usage of our sight.
With warm, clear colour all its vastness gleams
As the tall windows flood its space with light.

Remembering the gargoyles of Notre Dame, we find " Notre Dame Gargoyles "—the last two stanzas follow :

Here on this giddy height he keeps his head
While men are losing theirs so far below him.
An ant-like struggle for their daily bread
Is all the little creatures have to show him.

I shall be careful after I descend
Into what awkward pose I let life shove me,
Knowing as I pursue each petty end
What a sardonic smile gleams out above me.

Miss Crenshaw resembles the minstrel who travels and sings. She says " Poetry is the great spirit of Browning, the rich fantasy and exuberant vitality of Shakespeare, the serene understanding and tender whimsicalness of James Stephens,—all these things expressed in clear, vibrant, unselfconscious words."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

Our contributor, Elizabeth Wild, a life-member of the Poetry Society, is an American educator, poet and lecturer. She has held responsible positions in city schools of three states of the union, including that of principal of the State School for Girls of Nebraska. She confesses a liking for the subject of philosophy and has read all the philosophies, from Hume to Nietzsche, though not much attracted to the latter (because of his giving so much attention to the negative features of the subject). Her articles and criticisms have appeared in educational journals of both America and of London. Her first critical articles were published in 1918 in *Western Journal of Education*, San Francisco, edited by Harr Wagner (who is still editor of that educational work), and the issue of THE POETRY REVIEW, included one of her critical articles. The American Anthology recently brought out by the Galleon Press (N.Y.) contains three of her poems—which have been radiocast from several eastern stations. Princeton University alumni voted her peace-poem (dedicated to Woodrow Wilson) to a place in the Wilson Memorial Library, in that university. For twelve years Mrs. Wild's home has been in Berkeley, California, where she devotes her time to lectures to clubs and student-groups.

In our appreciation of *Diversions*, we unfortunately gave the editor's name as C. H. Williamson and not Wilkinson which is correct.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:
THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The difficulties and anxieties caused by our enemy's latest phases of barbarism have had, as one of their effects, an influence which tends to paralyse temporarily the usual mental and emotional activities. The number of our contributions has declined a little. The quality is, perhaps, not quite so good as usual.

Premium awards are made to BRENDA SKENE (London, W.) for three fine lyrics combining meditative power with vivid description and felicity of phrase; to REDCLIFFE MCKIE (Brighton) for ardent and passionate poetry, breathing sincerity in every line; and to P. E. LEAVER (Witham) for two poems inspired by a strong spirit of faith and hope, and showing admirable qualities of flowing rhythm.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
Marguerite Edgelow, Maidstone;
Terence Heywood, Oxford;
L. E. Leaper, Saint-Columb;
Joyce T. Rowe, London, N.W.;
Bertha T. Skeat, Sedbergh;
Margery Smith, Nottingham;
A. Lynnford Smith, Wanstead;
Dorothy Trail, Vancouver.

COMMENDED:

Vere Arnot, Walton-on-Thames;
Elizabeth Barrett, Thame;
Pamela Coulthard, Stroud;
J. Fry, Oxford;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield;
Ida Sutherland Groom, Bristol;
J.W.G.H., Ealing;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal;
H. Hill, Nottingham;
Gladys Hunkin, St. Ives;
Pauline Huthwaite, Grantham;
Irene H. Lewis, Leatherhead;
F.M., Cheltenham;
Kathleen Rooker Mason, Walsall;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
P. E. Procter, London, S.W.;
Harry Sefton, Lytham, Lancs.;
Roberta Shuttleworth, Guildford;
Gerald Souster, Dorking;
Muriel Symmons, Salcombe;
Janet Urquhart, Sanderstead;
A. M. Walker, Southport.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by December 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author.

Australian, South African, American and other overseas contributors are reminded that they should send their MSS by any available mail. If received after one closing date, they will be carried forward to the next adjudication. It is more than ever desirable to continue and extend our long distance connections and maintain a poets' fellowship that is world-wide and incomparable.

NANCY POLLOK issues the ultimatum of "THE WOMEN TO THE WAR LORDS":

We will not make you men to feed the guns,
Nor breed you victims for your rage and hate!
Why should we suffer to create our sons,
That you may slaughter still and desecrate?

We will not make you men—magnificence
Of glowing eye, strong body, god-like brain—
Till you have done with this mad insolence,
Hewing the nations down like fields of grain.

We will not give God's image life on earth,
That you eternally may crucify,
Better to close the mighty gates of birth
Till you and your insanity shall die.

Better our aching arms should never know
A mother's joy, than we should hate our breath,
Caught in a web of black and impotent woe
Because you brought our sons to bitter death!

E. CURT PETERS, (Chalfont St. Giles), admonishes "A FAT MAN ENCOUNTERED IN THE TRAIN":

"Three freighters sunk! We can't afford to lose
"Our food supply ships at this rate, my dear!"
Unfeeling oaf, consumed with craven fear!
Can you not place yourself in seamen's shoes,
In thought if not in deed? What of your brave
Compatriots, whose selfless sacrifice
Pays your security's unequal price?
Pot-bellied egoist, know that to save
Your pampered skin men uncomplainingly
Set forth upon the mine-infested seas,
Forswearing lives of safety and of ease,
Sundered from sweetheart, wife and family.
To their denial you owe your daily bread,
And many a brave man dies so you may live:
Yet have you not so much as thanks to give!
What matter mourners' tears for their loved dead,—
So long as you are fed!

G. S. ODDY (Ryde) contributes a "SONNET IN SPENSERIAN METRE":

O Nazarene! Not mine faith firm enough
To follow thee. Thy precepts I admire,
And if the way were not so steep and rough,
Thy light had set my little lamp on fire,
Thy hand smote on my heartstrings as a lyre.

But I am loth to leave the flower-decked board,
Its merry throng, glances that wake desire,
Gay jests that rise as cheerful wine's outpoured,
A patron's smile or fortune's rich reward.
Yet, when the music dies and mirth is done;
Roses lie withered, none the host applaud:
Then, thwarted soul perceives the web sense spun,
And cries "There is no harder path than this I chose.
More wise thy friends. Would I were one of those!"

T. E. Casson (Ulverston) describes "Rush-Bearing in a North Country Village":

This antique tower, stark buttress from the Scot,
And carvèd with the mouldering Virgin Queen
Of heaven, rings out across the rushes green
Its chime that through the centuries changes not.
And, year by year, the villagers whose lot
Mitigates man's first trespass, from the sheen
And tranquil islet of the tarn, bring clean
Grasses to strew the church in season hot.
Then pipes the tabret and the fiddles squeak.
The banner flutters, and the sheet out-hung
To hold the sieves is borne by maidens meek
To the grey tower from whence the chimes have rung.
The aisle is hush'd for the still prayer: the hymn
Rises at dusk to the saints from waters dim.

Pauline Huthwaite imagines "Last Thoughts":

If I go out into the dark alone,
It will not be of war's grim devilry
That I shall think, when dying; it will be
Of robins' songs and scent of hay new mown,
The young grass in the springtide, violet strown,
The cloud of blossom on an April tree.
Wood fires shall be my dying memory,
And all the gold of sunsets I have known.

While through such loveliness my mind shall range,
It will not seem so desolate to die,
I shall forget the weariness and pain,
And death will not be dark or cold or strange.
The bombs will tell of infamy, but I
Shall walk in morning meadows after rain.

Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport (Mon.) bids Farewell to W. H. Davies in an allusive poem, the first two stanzas dealing with his love of Nature; the third stanza with his tramping life; the fourth is a reference to his home life and his love poetry; and the concluding

stanza, his finding of the quiet place (of which he was so fond) and the summing-up (or epitaph):

He loved to stand and stare at life,
Until he saw things, strange but clear:
The leaf hung on a spider's web;
The hunch-backed robin standing near.
He laughed when swallows dived and swam in air,
And horses kicked the sky which wasn't there!

And he would loiter in green fields,
Attentive to the skylark's song,
While sheep and cattle turned and stared
To see him stand, entranced, so long;
And great his joy to hear the cuckoo's cry
That day he saw the rainbow in the sky!

But now no more the vagabond
Will meet him in a leafy lane
To talk with him of by-gone days—
Of tramps in sun and wind and rain;
No longer will he drink with beggar-men,
For he is gone away, beyond their ken.

Gone from his little house of joy
Where with his Dinah he would sit,
Happy to hold her skein of wool
For her to wind, and then to knit:
No more will he read in his treasured books,
Or walk his garden with its leafy nooks.

For 'mid the turmoil, stir, and strife
Of war has he found peace again—
A quiet place, so calm and still,
Away from sun and wind and rain,
Where he may rest beneath a shady tree—
Sublime in his simplicity!

POETS AND THE DEFENCE OF BRITAIN

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW)

SIR,—Like many, I welcomed the advent of Mr. John Waller to THE POETRY REVIEW. But I think and hope that his "Love and War" must have been written some time ago, before, for instance, the name "Dunkirk" became a word to be spoken with reverent pride. For Mr. Waller, incredible as it seems, actually defends the flight of certain poets from this bombarded land to safety. (How the introduction of conscription in the United States must be startling these fugitives!) He writes: "The great poet is best serving his cause by writing," and complains that "this country has no better use for its greatest minds than to put them into the infantry or the

artillery." At once the question arises as to what court is to decide which minds are so great that the skins which they inhabit must be most carefully preserved. And was Aeschylus a sinner against the light when he took part in the battles of Marathon, Salamis, Plataea? Should the recruiting-sergeant have refused to accept "Simon Cumberbatch" as a trooper in the Dragoons, divining somehow that the uncouth recruit was some day going to write "The Ancient Mariner"? Suppose that Shakespeare as an unknown strolling player of twenty-four had been taken by a press-gang and forced to serve in one of Drake's ships when England was threatened by the overwhelming might of Spain. Should some prescient authority have detected that this land-lubber was going to be the greatest poet of all time and have ordered his release? It will be seen that the matter is not as simple as Mr. Waller, with the assurance of youth, would force us to believe. But he has no doubt about what "great poet" of to-day should be most carefully guarded from all bodily risk, should be urged (I was about to write "encouraged," but the word somehow sounded inappropriate) to seek some far-off haven of safety, and to avoid taking any part in defending this land, our daily life and our freedom, against the most devilish attack that ever threatened these things which are rather dear to most of us, so dear that millions to-day are holding that fine creed that "it is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees."

Mr. Waller's choice of a "great poet" is—Mr. Auden! *Mr. Auden!!!* In the language of the land to which this young gentleman has removed himself, "Can you beat it?" Or in the words of the Roman satirist, "*Risum teneatis amici*," which may be similarly rendered, "Say, you guys, don't laff!" Mr. Waller's argument would logically compel him to insist that if Mr. Auden were in a sinking ship the traditional order "Women and children first" would have to be replaced by: "Stand back there and make way for the great poet, our most precious Mr. Auden."

By the term "great poet" nearly all of us mean somebody whom it is not ridiculous to speak of as such along with Homer, the Greek tragedians, the famous Latin poets, and with Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley. Compared with these Mr. Auden is at most a poetaster, who might well pray "save me from my friends." But judged by more every-day standards Mr. Auden is undoubtedly a poet, a rather minor poet who has not given to our language one single line or phrase that lives upon men's lips, except, perhaps, in derision, but still one who now and again shows a touch of the true fire. There are two in the selections which Mr. Waller gives us, one in the fourth stanza of *Capital*, and the quotation from *Spain*. Mr. Waller wisely refrains from quoting the lines which conclude the latter poem, lines which might well be used as a test of the presence or lack of a sense of humour. I refer to the passage (see this REVIEW for September 1937) beginning with that

truly remarkable specimen of humourless, platitudinous bathos,

" To-morrow, perhaps, the future,"

and including the unintentionally comic line

" To-morrow for the young the poets exploding like bombs."

The other day Professor Basil de Selincourt, in noticing Mr. Auden's last book, wrote that " the very fact that Mr. Auden's crackle sounds extra-modern means that in twenty years much in him that now goes for effect will be merely tiring." And, indeed, to turn, after reading a little of what the whole world accepts as great poetry, to the poems which Mr. Waller gives us is to become aware of " the crackling of thorns under a pot."

I understand that my years are about thrice those of Mr. Waller. This has its advantages as well as its undeniable disadvantages. My senses must be duller, less ready to recognize and respond to something really new. (Please note the words " something *really* new.") But my years have taught me how true are two famous sayings, the wistful " si jeunesse savait," and that dictum by a famous Master of Trinity, " We are none of us infallible, not even the youngest of us."

When Mr. Waller has a son or a daughter of his own present years he will know very well that one of the ailments of adolescence, besides mumps and chicken-pox, etc., is the desire for " self-expression," to " live one's own life." But by that time Mr. Waller will have recognized that only once or twice in a generation or in half a century does youth, a Mozart, a Schubert, a Keats, give us some abiding possession.

A poet said of this our Britain that it is

" a land wherein
A man may think the thing he will."

That could most certainly no longer be said of it if we are conquered by our present enemies, whom certain writers, either through stupidity, or from a swollen sense of self-importance inflated by fatuous flattery, or from the very natural fear of getting hurt, refuse to resist.

Let us in these days bear in mind two messages from our poets :

" Who stands if England fall ? "

(Mr. Waller would apparently reply that Messrs. Auden and Co. would still remain.) And

" Come the whole world against her, England yet shall stand."

Some members of The Poetry Society may not agree with me. Very well. If a post-card vote can be arranged, and if the result shows that a *substantial* minority of our members disagree with me, I will forfeit £5 to a war-charity selected by Mr. Waller. Puck has just suggested to me, and I accept the suggestion, that the number of this minority might suitably be the Scriptural " Six hundred and three score and six," the Number of the Beast. In conclusion, I disagree with the ranking of MacNeice below Auden. The former seems to me to have far the finer brain, and it has been far more trained and tried.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

The Athenaeum, London, S.W.1, October 6th, 1940.